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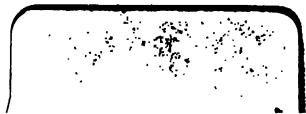
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THE GOLDSMITH'S WIFE.

A Tale.

BY

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH,

AUTHOR OF

"PRESTON FIGHT," "BOSCOBEL," "MANCHESTER REBELS," "TOWER OF LONDON," "OLD SAINT PAUL'S," &c. &c. &c.

I met her as returning
In solemn penance from the public cross.
Submissive, sad, and lowly was her look;
A burning taper in her hand she bore,
Her streaming eyes bent ever on the earth,
Except when in some bitter pang of sorrow,
To heaven she seemed in fervent zeal to raise them,
And beg that mercy man denied her here.

BOWE. *Jane Shore.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON :

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

1875.

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THE GOLDSMITH'S WIFE.

Book the Fourth.

[CONTINUED.]

EDWARD THE FOURTH.



III.

FOX AND GEESE.

THE Court had removed from Westminster to Windsor Castle, and Edward had not been at the latter place many days when intelligence was brought him that the young Duchess Marie of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold, whom Clarence had sought in marriage, but who had bestowed her hand upon Maximilian, Duke of Austria, had been killed by a fall from her horse while hawking.

This sad event disturbed the king greatly, inasmuch as it was likely to lead to important occurrences. The ill-fated duchess, thus suddenly snatched away in the spring of life, left one child, a daughter, then only three and a half years old. Marguerite of Austria, the child in question, was now the greatest heiress of the day ; and it was said that when the wily Louis of France heard of the death of the duchess, wholly disregarding his treaty with the King of England, he resolved to affiance the infant duchess to the Dauphin.

This startling piece of news, conveyed by the English ambassadors at the Court of France, was well calculated to alarm Edward ; but after reflecting upon it, and consulting with the queen, he thought it im-

probable, well knowing that Maximilian, the father of the child, would be adverse to the alliance; and he therefore contented himself with instructing his ambassador, the Lord Howard, who was then at Plessis-les-Tours, with Louis, to watch carefully over the cunning king's proceedings, and report them. For his own part, he said, he refused to doubt his good brother's sincerity.

A more impolitic course could not have been adopted. Heavily bribed by Louis, the ambassadors sent their royal master no further information till the secret treaty for the marriage, of which they were perfectly cognisant, had been concluded at Arras, and the little princess was on the way to Paris.

Whatever rumours reached him, Edward

disregarded them, and smiled incredulously when warned by some of his faithful counsellors against the artifices of Louis.

In a large withdrawing-room, belonging to the queen's apartments in the castle, hung with cloth of gold arras, and otherwise splendidly furnished, were assembled, one afternoon, all the king's children—namely, two young princes and six princesses; and a more charming collection of young persons, ranging from very tender years to well-nigh sixteen, could not be found.

The queen had brought her royal husband a numerous family, for three were dead. Of the eight left, all were distinguished for grace and good looks, and some of the princesses were exquisitely beautiful. Elizabeth of York, the eldest of Edward's

daughters, who was now, as just intimated, in her sixteenth year, possessed great personal charms, though they were scarcely fully developed, and was extremely amiable in disposition. Her own choice had not been consulted in the important marriage arranged for her by the king her father; but although she had no predilection for the Dauphin, and had not even exchanged a letter with him, she was naturally well pleased with the notion of becoming Queen of France. Eventually, as is well known, she made as great a match, being wedded to Henry the Seventh of England; but this could not be then foreseen, for Richmond was then held captive in Brittany.

The Princess Elizabeth had a slight and graceful figure, and her features were regular, beautifully moulded, and characterised

by great sweetness of expression. She was very richly dressed, as, indeed, were all her sisters, even the youngest of them, who was merely a little girl. Her fair tresses were covered by a caul of gold, and allowed to stream down her back, while her slender waist was spanned by a magnificent girdle. Her *côte-hardie* was of figured satin, and worn so long as almost to hide her pointed shoes.

The young princesses, her sisters, were all equally richly dressed; three of them, Cicely, Anne, and Bridget, in kirtles of cloth of gold and silver; and the two younger, Mary and Catherine, in little gowns of embroidered velvet.

All five were excessively pretty, but perhaps the prettiest of the whole party was the second daughter, Cicely, who bore a

marked resemblance to her royal father. She was then promised to the Prince of Scotland, but actually married Lord Wells. The Princess Cicely had lovely features, rich brown tresses, soft blue eyes, and a brilliant complexion.

The Princess Anne resembled her mother, and promised to be quite as beautiful as the queen was in her younger days. She was to have married into the royal house of Austria, but became Duchess of Norfolk.

Bridget, who, even as a child, had a meek and devout appearance, became a nun. The Princess Mary ought to have been Queen of Denmark, but died too soon.

Edward would fain have married his youngest daughter, Catherine, to the heir to the throne of Portugal, but fate decreed

it otherwise, and gave the fair princess to an English noble, William Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire.

Thus it will be seen that not one of these young princesses married according to their royal father's plans. Perhaps they were happier in the alliances they formed. We cannot answer that question. Fortunately, the princes, their brothers, could not foresee the dark fate that awaited them.

Edward, Prince of Wales, then nearly thirteen, was graver and more thoughtful than consorted with his years. He was of a studious turn, and not so fond of sports and exercises as his father had been at his age, but he was not allowed to neglect them. His health was somewhat delicate, and this gave a pale hue to his skin, and,

perhaps, imparted a slightly melancholy cast to his countenance. He might have divined that his life would not be long. His eyes were large and black, but lacked fire, and had an almost feminine softness ; and his cheeks were not so rounded as they should have been, and wanted bloom. His looks were full of sensibility. His limbs were well proportioned, but extremely slender, and he was tall for his age. His dark-brown hair was cut short over the brow, which was paler than his cheek, and bore traces of great delicacy ; but long locks hung down at the sides and at the back.

Very different from the Prince of Wales was Richard Duke of York. He was rather more than three years younger than his

brother, was full of health and spirit, having a rosy complexion, bright blue eyes, and long, fair locks.

The young duke was never happier than when in the saddle. He was constantly in the tilt-yard, and had a little suit of armour made for him and a small lance.

On the present occasion he was attired in a white satin doublet, figured with silver, his surcoat being of blue velvet, ornamented with the royal cognisance. His long hose were of white silk, and his shoes of velvet.

Though different in character, as in appearance, the two brothers were strongly attached to each other, and evinced their regard by a most affectionate manner. As they now stood together in the midst of their fair sisters, the Prince of Wales had his arm over the young duke's shoulder.

In another part of the room three or four middle-aged dames, who acted as governesses to the young princesses, were seated at a table playing at marteaux—a game in which little ivory balls were placed in the holes of a board—with the two tutors of the young princes. The pages in attendance were amusing themselves with small ninepins—then called closkeys, but they had retired into the deep embrasure of a window, and left their charges to themselves. Other attendants in the royal livery were collected at the lower end of the room.

“Madame la Dauphine,” said the Prince of Wales to his eldest sister, “I suppose you will soon set out for France, to conclude your marriage with the Dauphin. I hear that the Sire de Beaujeu, with his wife and a brilliant company, are to be

sent to meet you at Calais, and conduct you to Paris, where you will have a magnificent reception."

"You know more than I do," replied the Princess Elizabeth. "I have heard nothing about it. But I believe that a messenger from our ambassador, the Lord Howard, is expected to-day. Then, no doubt, I shall learn my fate."

"I wish you would take me with you, Madame la Dauphine," cried the Duke of York. "I should so much like to see Paris. I am told the fêtes will be splendid—far finer than any we have in London."

"Oh! take us all with you, dear Madame la Dauphine!" cried several small voices, delightedly. "We can go as demoiselles d'honneur."

"You must ask the queen, and not me,"

replied the Princess Elizabeth. "If she consents, I shall be delighted to take you."

"I have already petitioned her majesty," said the Princess Cicely; "and though I almost went down on my knees, she had the cruelty to refuse me."

"Oh, dear! then there is little chance for us!" cried the Princesses Anne and Mary.

"You forget you are both engaged to be married," remarked the Prince of Wales. "What would the King of Denmark say to you, Mary?"

"I don't care for the King of Denmark!" replied the little princess. "I have never seen him!"

"I have never seen the Dauphin," observed the Princess Elizabeth. "Yet I would not do anything to displease him."

"None of us have seen our intended hus-

bands," said Cicely. "Nor shall we be allowed to do so till our turn comes. I have no wish to visit Edinburgh, where my sweet prince dwells, but I have a very great desire to go to Paris."

"I thought you were frightened of King Louis?" said the Duke of York.

"So I am; dreadfully frightened of him," rejoined Cicely. "But he won't be at the Louvre. He never leaves Plessis-les-Tours. I wouldn't go there for the world. They say all the habitations near the château are pulled down and the trees hung with dead bodies."

"Those are idle stories," remarked the Princess Elizabeth. "I make no doubt Plessis is a very pleasant place, and the old king extremely good-natured."

"Plessis, I am sure, cannot be worse than

the Tower," remarked the Duke of York.
"I am always melancholy when I go there.
Yet the king, our father, likes the place."

"He has not been there of late," observed the Prince of Wales. "I have never liked the Tower since our uncle Clarence died there in that mysterious manner."

"Yes, that was a sad thing!" said the Duke of York. Then lowering his voice, he added, "I wish it had been our uncle Gloucester, instead."

"You are an ungrateful boy," said the Princess Elizabeth, gravely. "Your uncle Gloucester is very fond of you."

"His love is feigned," said the little duke:
"I don't like him."

"Neither do I," observed the Prince of Wales. "He is malicious and spiteful."

"You wrong him, Edward," said Eliza-

beth. “ ‘Tis his manner. He has a good heart.”

“ He has imposed upon you, sweet sister,” rejoined the Prince of Wales. “ I am not to be deceived by him.”

The princess made no answer, but, turning to little Bridget, who had hitherto taken no part in the conversation, she said :

“ When I am Queen of France, as I shall be one of these days, Bridget—for the king is growing old—you must come and stay with me at the Louvre.”

“ That cannot be, Elizabeth,” rejoined the little girl, looking at her fixedly. “ I shall be an abbess before you are queen.”

“ Bridget doesn’t know what she is talking about,” cried Cicely.

“ Yes, I do,” replied the little princess. “ I mean to be a nun, and in time I shall

become an abbess ; and when I am an abbess, Elizabeth will come to see me, but I shall not go to her."

This reply made the others look rather grave, but the Prince of Wales called out :

" We have talked quite long enough. Let us amuse ourselves with some game."

" What shall we play at ?" cried the Duke of York.

" I am for Prime-Mèrime," said Cicely.

" And I for Queue-leuleu," said Anne.

" I prefer Cache-cache," said Mary.

" My game is Cheval de Bois," said the little Catherine.

" And mine Pince-sans rire," added the Prince of Wales. " But what say you, Bridget ?"

" I don't mean to play," replied the future abbess, demurely.

“Since every one has a different choice, I will decide,” said the Duke of York. “We will play at fox and geese. You shall all be the geese, and I will be the fox.”

. And as they all dispersed, except the Princess Elizabeth and little Bridget, who remained looking on, the young prince bent down his head, rounded his shoulders as much as he could, and altered his gait, so as to give a grotesque representation of the Duke of Gloucester.

Though absurd, the likeness was instantly recognised, and the younger girls screamed with laughter, as the little prince chased them about the room, marching in a very haughty manner, like Gloucester.

Seeing what was going on, the pages joined in the merriment, and the governesses and tutors looked round from the martau

table, at which they were seated, and smiled.

The royal children were in the very midst of the fun, when the arras curtain masking the entrance to the adjoining apartment was suddenly drawn aside, and the king and queen came in, closely followed by the Duke of Gloucester.

IV.

HOW EDWARD DEEPLY RESENTED THE AFFRONT OFFERED
HIM BY LOUIS, AND VOWED TO INVADE FRANCE AGAIN.

So quiet was the entrance of the royal party, and so engrossed were the young Duke of York and the little princesses by their game, that for a few moments they were quite unconscious they were observed by the very person who ought not to have seen them.

Gloucester had, therefore, the mortification of seeing himself mimicked by his youthful nephew; but what was infinitely

more annoying, he heard the laughter and jests excited by the representation.

Nevertheless, he preserved his countenance, and would have feigned not to understand what was going on, if Malbouche, who was close behind him, had not called his attention to the little duke.

“Perdie! his highness is a rare mimic,” he cried. “He has caught me to the life.”

“Go to, knave!” rejoined Gloucester. “The mockery is not meant for thee, as thou well know’st.”

“For whom, then, can it be intended?” said the jester, innocently. “I cannot suppose the duke would ridicule your grace. Yet, now I look again, it may be so.”

At this moment the game stopped, and the little actors engaged in it seemed

abashed. The principal offender expected to be severely reprimanded, but the king merely said to him :

“ Personal deformities ought never to be derided. You must not do the like again, or you will be corrected. Go and apologise to the duke, your uncle.”

The young prince instantly obeyed. Assuming a penitential air, he went up to Gloucester, and said :

“ Your pardon, gentle uncle, if I have offended you.”

“ Nay, I have been highly diverted by your drollery, fair nephew,” replied Gloucester. “ But it is not always safe to mimic people to their face. There are some who might resent it, though I am not one of them.”

“ I hope you will not bear me malice,

gentle uncle," said the little duke. "They say you are spiteful; but I do not believe it, for I have ever found you good-natured."

"And so I am," rejoined Gloucester. "They who call me spiteful do me great injustice," he added, glancing at the queen. "I am as inoffensive as a lap-dog—unless provoked."

"And then as savage as a wild boar," muttered Malbouche.

"Methinks my uncle Gloucester is really angry with me," observed the Duke of York in a whisper to the queen. "He says he is not, but the glance of his eye contradicted his words."

"Rest easy, fair son," she rejoined, in the same tone. "I will make your peace with him anon. But offend him not again; for,

as I have often before told you, he is extremely malignant."

"He is watching us now, and guesses what you are saying," whispered the duke.
"Heaven save me from him!"

Among Edward's redeeming qualities was his love for his children, who were all warmly attached to him, though the strict etiquette observed at Court prevented any strong demonstration of their regard.

As soon as they were aware of his presence, they all advanced ceremoniously towards him, attended by their governesses and tutors, and each made him a profound obeisance, and another reverence to the queen.

The king, however, took all his younger children in his arms, and kissed them affectionately.

Little Bridget appeared to be his favourite, for he gazed tenderly into her face, as he held her up before him.

“And so you wish to become a nun, my little darling?” he asked. “What put the notion in thy head?”

“Heaven, sire,” she replied, in her childish voice. “The queen, my mother, has promised to place me in a convent.”

“Only for a time,” observed her majesty.

“And I promise to wed thee to a king, my beloved child,” said Edward. “Thou may’st therefore choose between a palace and a convent.”

“I choose the convent,” replied Bridget.

“Then I shall lose thee,” observed the king, with a sigh.

“No, sire; you will always know where to find me,” she replied. “And I shall

always be able to pray for your majesty and the queen."

"Heaven bless thee, my sweet child!" exclaimed Edward, kissing her, as he set her down.

He then turned to the Princess Elizabeth, who was standing near, and said :

"Ah! Madame la Dauphine, you will soon attain the exalted position to which you are destined. Within a week you will set out for Paris, there to seek your husband, the Dauphin. I am in hourly expectation of a messenger from the Lord Howard, our ambassador to the Court of France, and I doubt not I shall receive from King Louis a satisfactory answer to my peremptory demand that your marriage with the Dauphin be forthwith solemnised. I will brook no further delay;

and to prevent any more trifling on his part, I have given him to understand that his engagement made with me at Picquigny must now be fulfilled, or he must prepare for war."

"I hope this demand may not lead to a rupture between your majesty and King Louis," observed the princess. "I should grieve to be the cause of a war."

"Have no fear," replied Edward. "I am obliged to use threats to my good cousin. But you will see how mild his answer will be. As I have just said, you may prepare for your immediate departure for Paris."

"I am ready to obey your majesty's command in all things," said the princess. "But I cannot be happier at the French Court than I am here. Possibly I may

never see England again, and that thought makes me feel sad, at times."

"Then do not let it trouble you more," said the king. "Be sure the Dauphin will not prevent you from visiting us, should you feel so inclined. But you will become so enamoured of France, that you will have no desire to quit the country. The French Court is far more splendid than our own, and will be far gayer when you are its mistress."

"Wedded to the Dauphin, you will be quite my equal," said the queen.

"And the king's state of health forbids all chance of long life, so you will soon be queen," added Edward.

"I hope the Dauphin will like me," said the princess.

"Be as good a wife to him as the queen,

your mother, has been to me, and he cannot fail to be content," said the king.

"I will strive to imitate her, sire," replied the princess.

"One piece of counsel I will venture to give you, Madame la Dauphine," said Gloucester. "Meddle with nothing while Louis lives. When he is gone, do what you please."

"Sound advice," cried Edward. "You cannot be too careful with the jealous old king."

Just then, the Lord Chamberlain entered the room with a letter.

"Ha! the messenger has arrived from France!" cried Edward.

"This instant, my liege," replied Hastings; "and he brings this letter from Lord Howard to your majesty. I trust its contents will please you."

“Have you any doubt?” said the king, looking at him.

“I doubt all that comes from King Louis, sire,” replied Hastings.

Edward eagerly broke the seal of the letter, and as he scanned its contents, those who watched him—and almost every eye was upon him—could perceive that he was agitated by suppressed fury.

When he had finished reading the despatch, he crushed it in his hand, and flinging it from him, gave way to a violent explosion of rage.

“Ah, thou liar and deceiver!” he exclaimed. “Perjured and perfidious as thou art, bitterly shalt thou rue thy treachery! Never will I rest till I have taken vengeance upon thee; never will I forgive the outrageous affront offered me! I swear it by my father’s head! Within a month I

will invade thy territories with an army doubling in number that which I took with me before; and when I have taken thy kingdom from thee, and made thee and thy son captive, thou wilt regret that thou didst not keep faith with me!"

So furious were the king's looks and gestures as he gave utterance to these menacing words, that the royal children retreated from him in terror, and at a sign from the queen were hurried out of the room by their governesses and tutors.

Only the Prince of Wales and the Princess Elizabeth were left, and they looked frightened.

No one ventured to address the infuriated monarch till this access of rage had passed by; but when he grew somewhat calmer, the queen said to him :

“I comprehend that Louis has broken his engagement; but what hath happened?”

“Madame,” replied Edward, “it pains me to the heart to tell you, but I cannot withhold the fact, that our beloved daughter, who has so long borne the title of Dauphine of France, has been outrageously rejected by the double-dealer, Louis. Yes, my sweet love, ‘tis even so,” he added to the princess. “Thou, the fairest and best born princess in Europe, hast been shamefully slighted by him.”

“In what manner, my liege?” she inquired.

“Lord Howard’s letter, which I have just cast from me,” replied the king, “informs me that, three days ago, the Dauphin was betrothed at Amboise to Margaret of

Austria, daughter of the Duke Maximilian, in the presence of a large crowd of nobles."

"Is my brilliant dream thus ended?" cried the princess, unable to repress her emotion.

"Take comfort, my sweet child," cried the queen, tenderly embracing her. "The king, your father, will make another match for you, better than the one broken off."

"That cannot be," said the princess.

"I promise you shall be a queen," said Edward. "But my first step shall be to punish the offender. I will immediately return to Westminster, and summon the whole of the nobles, and tell them I have resolved to declare war against the perfidious Louis, to avenge the affront offered to us, to them, and the whole king-

doin, in the person of our dearly beloved daughter."

"Every voice will be with you, my liege," said Hastings. "Every sword will be drawn for the princess."

"I pray your majesty to take me with you to France," said the Prince of Wales, kneeling to the king. "I will show the Dauphin that he shall not affront my sister!"

"You shall go," replied Edward. "I am well pleased with the request."

"You may become as renowned as the first Prince of Wales, gentle nephew," said Gloucester. "If his majesty will trust you to my charge, and the campaign lasts long enough, I will teach you the art of war. I trust, my liege, there will be no more treaties."

“Not with Louis,” rejoined the king, sternly. “He shall not delude me again. If I sign a peace, it shall be at Paris, and I will dictate my own terms. Come, madame,” he added, taking the queen’s hand to lead her forth. “Let us to Westminister. This is a bitter disappointment to us both, but the wrong done shall be requited a hundred-fold.”

“Sister,” said the Prince of Wales to the princess, as they followed the royal pair out of the room, “my resolution is taken. Either I will slay the Dauphin, or the Dauphin shall slay me.”

“I would not check your valour,” she replied, smiling through her tears; “but it is Louis who is in fault, not the Dauphin.”

“Then I will slay Louis!” rejoined the prince.

V.

WHAT PASSED IN THE KING'S ANTE-CHAMBER, AND OF THE
SECRET INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY GLOUCESTER TO CATESBY.

EDWARD acted with unwonted energy.

On the day after his return to Westminister, he summoned all his nobles, and acquainting them with the galling affront he had received, announced his intention of at once declaring war against Louis. At the same time, he did not neglect to refer to his own pretensions to the throne of France, but stated emphatically that he was now determined to assert them.

The address was responded to with enthusiasm. All the peers present expressed the greatest indignation at the ill-faith and duplicity of Louis, pronounced the war just and necessary, and raising their hands with one accord, vowed to lay down their lives in his majesty's service.

The Lord Mayor and the citizens, who were next summoned, were equally enthusiastic, and undertook to raise all the money required.

Moreover, the proclamation of a war with France, which immediately followed, caused great satisfaction throughout the kingdom. Thus Edward had every prospect of obtaining the vengeance he desired.

In return for the hearty support the king had experienced, he gave a series of grand banquets; and he indulged so freely at

these entertainments, that his health manifestly suffered.

The change in his appearance was so perceptible, that those who loved him became greatly alarmed; while the few who desired his death, from ambitious or other motives, began to think that the crisis was at hand. Among the latter was Gloucester. In his dark breast fresh hopes were kindled by his royal brother's recklessness.

On the morning after one of these grand banquets, at which the king had sat longer than usual, and drank more deeply, several nobles and other important personages were assembled in the ante-room communicating with his majesty's bed-chamber.

Though the hour was somewhat late Edward had not yet risen, and some curiosity, not unmixed with uneasiness, was exhib-

bited to learn how his majesty had passed the night. The only person allowed entrance to the royal chamber was the Marquis of Dorset, the queen's son by her first marriage. Dorset was Constable of the Tower, and keeper of the king's treasures. The young noble had not yet reappeared.

At length the door opened, and Dorset came forth, looking very grave. In reply to the anxious inquiries addressed to him, he simply said, "His majesty has passed a bad night, and will not be disturbed."

Among the distinguished personages in the ante-room were the Duke of Buckingham and the Lords Hastings and Stanley ; and as they were special favourites of the king, and generally admitted to his presence at all times, they naturally concluded that they could now go in ; but the Mar-

quis of Dorset, noticing their design, stopped them, and said :

“ My lords, the king must not be disturbed.”

“ How is this, my lord ? ” cried Hastings. “ Is his majesty unwell ? ‘ Tis the first time I have been excluded from his chamber ! I will go in ! ”

“ And so will I ! ” said Buckingham.

“ Do as you please, my lords,” observed Dorset. “ I have repeated his majesty’s injunctions.”

And, bowing haughtily, he moved on through the ante-chamber.

A strong feeling of animosity, as we have already mentioned, existed between the old nobility and the queen’s family, of whom Lord Rivers and the Marquis of Dorset were the head. Hastings and the others

were, therefore, highly displeased that Dorset should be preferred to them, but they hesitated to disobey the king's express commands.

"If aught happens, that presumptuous upstart's pride shall be lowered!" said Buckingham. "'Tis my belief he has kept us from seeing his majesty. I hope nothing ails the king."

"Nothing more than a sick headache, caused by last night's excess," said Hastings. "But Dorset would have us believe that his majesty is really ill."

"And so he is," observed Lord Stanley. "Most assuredly, if he continues in this mad course, he will kill himself."

"He will never be able to conduct the war with France in person," said Hastings.

"No; he must relinquish the command

of the army to Gloucester," said Buckingham; "and that will mortify his majesty greatly. He counted upon entering Paris in triumph."

"His absence will be a great gain to Louis, and render the issue of the contest doubtful," said Lord Stanley. "'Tis almost to be regretted now that the war has been undertaken."

Just then the Duke of Gloucester entered the ante-chamber, attended by Catesby. He directed his steps towards the three nobles, who advanced to salute him.

"Is not the king visible?" he asked.

"No one has seen him but Dorset," replied Hastings. "But your highness can go in, if you list."

"Is he ill? Is Doctor Lewis with him?" said Gloucester, quickly. "If so, I will see him."

“His majesty, I trow, will be well enough to join the banquet this evening, and drink more wine of Chalosse,” observed Buckingham, significantly.

“Ha! is that all?” cried Gloucester.

“Your highness should dissuade him from his fatal course,” said Hastings. “If he persists in it, there can but be one result.”

“I dissuade him!” cried Gloucester. “I have no influence with him, as you wot well. Get Mistress Shore to advise him. She might check him in his baneful habit. None else can. I am sorry not to see the king—but it matters not. He might not be in the humour to talk to me. I am about to set out to York, as I have some matters to arrange there for his majesty, before we start for France.”

Then, taking Buckingham’s arm, he whis-

pered in his ear, “Should aught happen—you understand—should aught happen, I say, send an express to me at York.”

“Without an instant’s delay,” replied the duke.

“Enough,” replied Gloucester. Then, turning to the others, he said aloud, “Farewell, my lords! Tell the king I have been here, but would not disturb him. I will write to his majesty from York.”

With this he moved off, bowing haughtily to the throng of nobles, as he passed through their midst.

Near the door the room was clear, and halting there, he said to Catesby, by whom he was still attended, “Remain here. Attend the banquet to-night, and write me word how his majesty looks. Dost heed?”

Catesby bowed assent, and the duke added, in a low and deeply-significant voice, “The work thou hast to do must be no longer delayed. Thou hast the phial I gave thee?”

“I carry it ever about me,” your highness,” repeated the other.

“Use it to-night,” said Gloucester. “Use it cautiously, as I bade thee. A few drops will suffice. The king drinks nothing but wine of Chalosse. Hand him the cup.”

Catesby bowed, and the duke quitted the ante-chamber.

VI.

**NOW THE WARRANT FOR TEN THOUSAND GOLDEN CROWNS
BY THE KING TO JANE DISAPPEARED.**

EDWARD declined to hold any audience that morning on the plea of slight indisposition; but as soon as he had completed his toilette, which occupied him some time—for, as already stated, he was extraordinarily particular about his dress—he repaired to Jane's apartments, which were situated in a wing of the palace, overlooking the gardens and the river, splendidly furnished, and hung with the finest arras.

The fair mistress of these magnificent rooms received him almost ceremoniously, as was her wont; but he looked so exhausted, that she took his hand, and led him to a fauteuil, into which he immediately sank.

Seeing his exhausted condition, she caused some refreshments to be brought, and poured him out a cup of hippocras with her own hand. He only ate a few conserves and cates, but the cordial beverage revived him.

At a sign from his majesty, all the attendants withdrew, and they were left alone together.

“I must have done with these banquets, Jane,” said the king. “Were it not that I have invited the Lord Mayor and the chief citizens of London to dine with me to-day,

I would forswear revelry altogether. But I cannot disappoint my worthy friends at this juncture. However, to-day's banquet shall be the last. On that I am firmly resolved."

"I have little reliance on your good resolutions, sire," said Jane. "Formed in the morning, they are constantly broken in the evening."

"In sooth, I find it difficult to refrain," said Edward. "This hippocras is very good. Fill my cup again."

Jane shook her head, and said, playfully, "Your majesty is in my hands now, and I shall take care of you. If I could wait upon you at the banquet this evening, you should not exceed."

"You shall be my cup-bearer, if you list," replied Edward, smiling.

"I take you at your word, my liege, and accept the office," she rejoined. "I have still the costume I wore in France."

"Then don it to-night," said the king. "Be Isidore again, and place yourself behind my chair. When you bid me hold, I will drink no more."

"Oh! my liege," she exclaimed, "do but act up to the wise resolve you have just formed, and far greater power will be yours than you have ever yet enjoyed. No monarch in Europe is so proudly placed as you are now. Your throne is secured. Your subjects idolise you. Your enemies fear you. You have sons to succeed you—daughters contracted to princes. All that a great king can achieve you have accomplished. You have fought many battles, and have never been defeated; nor will

you ever be defeated in the field. But you have an enemy more to be dreaded than your stoutest adversary—more than Louis himself. That enemy is here," she added, holding up the goblet. "If you conquer not this mortal foe, he will conquer you. 'Tis right you should hear the truth from me, and, however painful it may be to speak it, I cannot remain silent. Already those who hope to profit by your death have noted the change, and laid their plans. The ambitious and designing Gloucester, against whom I have repeatedly warned your majesty, has watched you narrowly."

"Gloucester has set out for York this very morn," remarked Edward.

"I am glad of it," she replied. "But he has left many friends behind, in whom your majesty places confidence. Their

schemes, however, will prove futile if you are true to yourself. Be the great Edward whom I first loved, whom I still love, and shall ever love; but who will sacrifice power, life, and love, if he shakes not off the fetters in which he is bound."

For some moments the king seemed buried in thought. At last he raised his head, and looking earnestly at her, said:

"You have touched me deeply, Jane. To-morrow I will wholly refrain from the maddening potion."

"Why not to-night, sire?" she cried.
"Oh, be persuaded by me!"

"A revel, more or less, cannot affect me seriously."

"Consult your physician, Doctor Lewis, sire. He will tell you differently."

"You know I eschew physic, and never take advice from Doctor Lewis," replied the

king. “Surely, 'tis enough that you will be present to stint me in my cups! Were Alice Fordham here, she might attend you as Claude. What has become of her?”

“She has returned to her husband, my liege; and the gifts I have bestowed upon her have made her welcome to him. But she has deceived me—basely deceived me—and I no longer love her.”

“In what manner has she deceived you?” inquired the king. “I am aware you have dismissed her, but I know not her fault.”

“I discovered that she has taken bribes from the Duke of Gloucester, sire,” replied Jane. “I did not mention the matter to your majesty, because I thought it would anger you.”

“Again Gloucester!” exclaimed the king.
“He seems to be plotting everywhere.”

“ Since he could not induce me to take part in his schemes, sire, he tried Alice Fordham,” replied Jane; “ and with her he succeeded.”

“ Ha! this must be inquired into!” cried Edward, fiercely. “ ‘Tis well for himself that he hath gone to York, or I would have sent him at once to the Tower. But I will have him back; and if I find him guilty, he shall——. But no, no!” he added, with a sudden change of manner, and speaking in a hollow voice; “ I must not have a second brother’s blood upon my soul! I have had no peace since Clarence died.”

“ But Gloucester wrested the warrant for his brother’s death from your majesty,” said Jane. “ His, therefore, is the guilt. I urge no severe measures against Gloucester, but my love for your majesty bids me say, ‘ Beware of him!’ ”

In the hope of chasing away the king's gloom, Jane took up her lute, and sang a tender romance of which he had once been very fond. He listened as if entranced. The notes vibrated through his breast, and recalled the days when he had first heard the song.

When she ceased singing, he said, "Do you recollect, Jane, that it was on this very day—now seven years ago—that I first beheld you?"

"I recollect it well, sire," she replied, with something like a sigh. "The past seems like a dream to me."

"A happy dream, I hope?" he said.

"Too happy, sire," she rejoined. "Moments of sadness have occurred, but they have soon passed. 'Tis the wakening from this long, blissful dream that I dread. I

would fain slumber on to the end. Oh, if I were to lose your majesty, what would become of me?"

"You will be wealthy, Jane," he rejoined.

"But I shall have lost all I care for—all I love!" she exclaimed. "Wealth will be nothing to me. I have not loved your majesty for the many rich gifts you have bestowed upon me, but for yourself."

"There is nothing mercenary in your disposition, Jane; that I well know," he replied. "Moreover, I am quite aware you have given away large sums; so that you may not, after all, be so rich as you ought to be——"

"Sire," she interrupted, "I have enough. I want nothing."

"But you may want more than you

have," cried Edward. "I may be snatched from you suddenly. 'Tis my business to provide for you, and I will do so at once. Here is an order on the Marquis of Dorset, the keeper of my treasures, already signed and sealed," he added, taking a paper from the richly-ornamented *gipcière* that hung from his girdle. "Fill in the name, and the amount—ten thousand golden crowns."

"Sire, 'tis too much!" she cried.

"Obey my behest," he said.

Unable to refuse, she proceeded to a table, on which writing materials were placed, and wrote as the king had commanded her.

While she was thus occupied, Edward arose; and as soon as she had finished, he took the paper from her and examined it."

"This sum will be paid you by Dorset," he said, as he gave her back the warrant. "'Tis meant as a provision for you in the event of my death; and I trust you will not yield to the too-generous impulses of your nature, and by giving a portion of it away, defeat my object. Keep it for yourself, I pray you. You may need it."

Jane could make no reply, for emotion stopped her. After a vain effort to speak, she fell into his arms, and shed tears upon his breast.

The scene just described was witnessed by an unseen observer.

A secret door behind the hangings, of the existence of which both the king and Jane were ignorant, had been noiselessly opened, and the person who passed through it slightly raised the arras, and could therefore see and hear what took place.

After a while, Jane recovered from her emotion, and, as she looked up with streaming eyes at the king, he bent down and kissed her brow.

“*Adieu, ma mie!*” he said. “You will attend upon me at the banquet to-night?”

“Doubt it not, sire,” she replied. “Oh, that I could banish these misgivings from my breast!”

He smiled to reassure her, but somewhat sadly; for he was not altogether free from misgiving himself.

They paused for a moment at the door before the king went forth, and she watched his stately figure as he moved slowly along the corridor, attended by a couple of pages. Often had she thus watched him; but she never beheld him take that walk again.

In her agitation, Jane had dropped the

warrant given her by the king, nor did she think about it till his majesty had disappeared. She then looked about for it ; but it was gone.

Astonished and alarmed by the circumstance, she summoned an attendant, but could ascertain nothing satisfactory. No one had entered the room. Careful search was made, but the warrant could not be found.

As will have been surmised, it had fallen into the hands of the person concealed behind the hangings.

While the king and Jane stood together near the door, completely occupied with each other, this individual, who was very slightly built, and habited like a page, crept cautiously forth, took up the paper, and regained the hiding-place without being noticed.

On discovering her loss, Jane was in a state of distraction. Her first impulse was to acquaint the king with what had happened; but, on consideration, she resolved to defer all mention of the circumstance till the morrow.

VII.

OF EDWARD'S LAST BANQUET, AND HOW IT ENDED.

IN the great banqueting-hall of the palace, in the centre of the high table, placed at the upper part of the hall, beneath a gorgeous cloth of estate, embroidered in gold, with the royal badges of the falcon and fetterlock, the rose and sun, and the white hart, sat Edward.

Reserved for the king and his most distinguished guests, this elevated table was covered with perfumed damask, wrought with flowers and figures, and furnished

with magnificent vessels of gold and silver.

Two other long tables, covered with finest cloths of diaper, and resplendent with plate, ran down the sides of the hall, so as to leave a great space free to the innumerable officers and attendants, cup-bearers, carvers, sewers, and gentlemen waiters, all in the royal livery.

At these lower tables sat the citizens and the general company—the Lord Mayor, who was no other than our old acquaintance, Randal Rubicel, the haberdasher, being assigned a place with the nobles.

Trumblers, with clarions adorned with fringed cloth of gold, stood in the centre of the hall, and minstrels were placed in a gallery, to enliven the company with their strains during the repast.

The entertainment was conducted with regal state. At the lower tables all were seated; but when the trumpets announced the entrance of the king, the guests immediately arose.

Edward was marshalled to his seat, beneath the cloth of estate, by the Lord Chamberlain and the Vice-Chamberlain, each carrying a white staff. He was attended by several officers in embroidered velvet doublets, all of whom had chains of gold round the neck. Among these was Catesby.

When the king was seated, Isidore, who was attired in precisely the same dress he had worn in France, took his place behind the royal chair. The handsome cup-bearer looked remarkably well, and excited general admiration.

Edward was magnificently arrayed, as usual. Over the richly embroidered satin doublet that encased his now portly person, he wore a purple robe, with long hanging sleeves, lined with the most precious furs.

On his right and left sat the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Northumberland, the Earl of Hastings, the Marquis of Dorset, and other nobles, all splendidly attired. The Lord Mayor was placed between Buckingham and Hastings, and being clad in his robes, and having the collar of S.S. round his neck, presented a very imposing appearance. Strangely altered was Randal Rubicel, and scarcely recognisable as the gallant young haberdasher of former days. He had been highly prosperous in his calling, and had grown enormously corpulent as well as rich. His features, however,

were not so much changed as his person, and he was still good-looking. He was devoted to the king, and had lent his majesty a large sum for the proposed war with France.

Illumined by great candles, almost as thick as torches, and made of perfumed wax, covered with silver vessels, and occupied by the goodly company described, the tables looked magnificent. As we have intimated, the body of the hall was thronged with the various officers belonging to the royal household; and through this crowd—just before the second service began—marched a score of yeomen of the kitchen, bearing great dishes, preceded by the master cook, a very stately personage, clad in damask velvet, with a chain of gold round his neck, and bearing a white wand.

Trumpets were blown as these dishes were set upon the table, and the minstrels played while the contents of the dishes were discussed..

Great hilarity prevailed, for though Edward had resolved to practise unwonted moderation that day, his guests had every temptation to exceed, for the wines were abundant and as excellent as the viands, and served in flowing goblets.

According to the taste of the period, many curious and admirably executed devices, representing the king's palaces, tournaments, and even the meeting between Edward and Louis at Picquigny, were placed upon the table. These pretty receptacles were filled with confectionery, comfits, cakes, and spices, which were served to those who cared to taste them.

Altogether, the banquet, destined to be his last, was one of the best ever given by the luxurious monarch ; and from circumstances connected with it, which we shall presently relate, it was long afterwards remembered.

As the repast proceeded, Edward recovered his spirits, and felt so much better, and in such a mood for enjoyment, that it was with difficulty he could put a constraint upon himself. But though he did not entirely refrain, he was far more temperate than usual.

As Isidore came forward with a silver flagon to fill his cup, he remarked, in a low voice :

“ Dost thou not recognise thy former suitor ? He is seated on the right, next to the Duke of Buckingham.”

"Why, that is the Lord Mayor, my liege!" exclaimed Isidore.

"Marry, the Lord Mayor was once thy suitor!" observed Edward, laughing. "Look at him again!"

"As I live, 'tis Randal Rubicel!" exclaimed Isidore.

"'Tis not surprising you knew him not at first, since he has waxed so wondrous fat," said Edward. "I need not say he is no longer a bachelor, for there is a lady mayoress; but he is a most worthy and liberal man, and I have a great regard for him. The Lord Mayor, however, is not the only one of your former suitors here present. All the others have been invited by my command. You will descry them at the lower tables."

Stepping back, Isidore looked around,

and soon discovered that the king was not jesting.

Yes ! there they all were. There sat Simon Muttlebury, the grocer ; Puncheon, the vintner ; Serge, the cloth-worker ; Buckram, the mercer ; Hide, the skinner, and half a dozen others, whose features Isidore well remembered, though, like Randal Rubicel, they were all much changed. Most of them had grown stout, and all had the easy, comfortable look of married men.

But where was Shore ? Was he present on this grand festive occasion ? Not as a guest, but he might have come thither uninvited.

So Jane thought ; and as her eye wandered over the crowd in the body of the hall, it alighted upon Father Sylvius.

Joyously the feast went on. Fresh dishes were brought in. The sewers and carvers did their devoir. Again and again, the goblets were replenished by the cup-bearers, and with the choicest wines. The minstrels played their liveliest strains. Laughter, scarcely subdued by the king's presence, resounded from the lower tables.

Yet despite the hilarity and enjoyment everywhere prevailing, Edward became sad. Sombre thoughts crossed him. With the sounds of revelry ringing in his ears—with the spectacle before him of that grand banquet and his joyous guests—he felt as if he could take no part in the general conviviality.

A warning voice, whose low accents were audible amid all the din, seemed to whisper that he had not long to live. He did not

dare to raise his eyes, lest he should read in characters of fire that his kingdom would be taken from him. But he almost fancied the terrible writing was there.

Like Jane, he had descried Father Sylvius amid the crowd in the hall, and the unlooked-for and unseasonable appearance of the friar awakened a train of gloomy thought, that quickly deepened, as we have described. A mortal sickness seized the king, and he felt he could not shake it off; but, unwilling to alarm the company, he called for wine, hoping a good draught might restore him.

His accents startled Jane, who now for the first time remarked the deathly pallor that had bespread his features. She would have instantly obeyed the command, but the flagon she held was well-nigh empty.

At this moment, Catesby interposed. The opportunity he sought to execute his direful purpose had now arrived. It came suddenly, but he was prepared.

"Here is a goblet of his majesty's favourite wine of Chalosse," he said.

"Give it me!" cried Jane, almost snatching the cup from him in her anxiety to serve the king.

"Here is that which will revive you, sire," she said, as she handed him the cup.

Edward drank deeply of the poisoned draught; and as Catesby watched him, he saw that the work was done.

For a few minutes the doomed monarch felt better, and those nearest him, who shared Jane's anxiety, thought he had rallied.

But the signs of improvement were fal-

lacious, and, in reality, he was much worse. His pale cheek flushed, and his eye blazed, but it was with an unnatural lustre. He attempted to converse, but his speech was thick, and his voice hoarse, as if from intoxication. Indeed, Buckingham and Hastings, who were well aware of his intemperate habits, attributed his condition to excess.

But Jane knew otherwise. Being close to him, she whispered in his ear :

“ You are unwell, sire—very unwell ! I pray you retire from the banquet.”

Feeling the advice was good, Edward immediately endeavoured to comply with it.

As he arose from his seat—not without great difficulty—the nobles on either side of him rose likewise, and at this sight the utmost consternation prevailed among the assemblage.

The din of revelry instantly ceased, wine-cups raised to the lips were set down untouched, and the strains of the minstrels were hushed.

But the alarm was only momentary, the company being quickly reassured by the Duke of Buckingham, who, by Edward's command, called out :

“ His majesty is compelled, by slight indisposition, to withdraw from the banquet ; but it is his royal pleasure that no interruption take place in it. The king hopes to return before the close of the feast. Meanwhile, he drinks to you all.”

At this announcement, the whole assemblage arose, and bowing around, the king drained the fatal cup.

Amid the murmurs of applause that followed, Edward retired, leaning on Jane's

shoulder, and attended by Hastings and half a dozen pages, and proceeded slowly towards his own apartments.

The banquet went on as merrily as before the interruption, but the king did not return.

After an hour or so, gentlemen ushers went round the tables, and, with grave looks, informed the guests that his majesty was seriously ill. Thereupon, the assemblage immediately dispersed.

Great confusion ensued, but while the guests were departing, Father Sylvius found his way to the corridor, and without being questioned, proceeded along it to the king's private apartments.

VIII.

WHAT OCCURRED AT THE KING'S DEATH-BED.

IN a magnificent chamber of the palace, hung with finest arras, and lighted by a dim lamp, in a state bed, with tester and ceiler of cloth of gold, having heavy embroidered curtains, and a counterpane furred with ermine, propped up by pillows, lay the royal Edward.

Immediately after the king's seizure at the banquet, Jane had laid aside her disguise, and assumed her own attire, and was

now watching by the slumbering monarch's couch.

On his removal to the chamber where we find him, Edward had been seized by violent sickness, after which he seemed somewhat better, and showed a strong disposition to sleep. Doctor Lewis, his physician, regarded this as a good sign, and declared, if he slept well throughout the night, he might recover—otherwise he would never rise from his couch.

Before resigning himself to sleep, the king expressly enjoined that Mistress Shore, and no other, should watch by his couch, and the command was strictly obeyed.

Every precaution being taken to insure quiet, Edward slept throughout the greater part of the night, not calmly, but heavily, while the groans that occasionally broke

from him showed he was troubled by painful dreams. So distressing were these sounds to hear, that Jane almost felt inclined to disobey the physician's orders, and wake him.

It was now the third hour of morn, and Jane was still anxiously watching by the couch—sometimes kneeling and praying for the royal sufferer.

Sad thoughts passed through her breast during this long, painful vigil. The end of her happiness seemed come, for she could not persuade herself that the king would recover. Indeed, as she gazed at him, she felt sure he could not live long.

While thus alternately watching and praying, she heard the door softly open, and Doctor Lewis came noiselessly in.

A man of middle age, with a grave cast of countenance, rendered graver than usual

by the present circumstances, the physician had a somewhat spare figure, and was clothed in a long, dark gown, edged with fur, above which he wore a furred cape. His long locks were covered by a black velvet skull-cap.

Stopping in the middle of the apartment, he signed Jane to come to him, and a few whispered words passed between them.

“Has my royal patient slept throughout the night?” inquired Doctor Lewis.

“Uninterruptedly, as you see him now,” replied Jane.

“That is well!” said the physician. “Let him sleep on. When he awakens, I shall be able to decide.”

With this, he stepped towards the couch, and gazed for some minutes on the slumbering monarch.

Apparently, the inspection satisfied him ; for he gave Jane a reassuring look, and quitted the room.

Overcome by fatigue and anxiety, Jane soon afterwards fell into a sort of doze, from which she was aroused by a slight touch on the shoulder, and looking up, she perceived Father Sylvius standing beside her.

“ You here !—and at this moment !” she exclaimed, in a low voice, so as not to disturb the king, whose heavy breathing could be distinctly heard.

“ 'Tis the very moment when I might be expected,” rejoined Father Sylvius. “ I must speak to the king.”

“ You shall not approach his couch !” she cried, placing herself between him and the sleeping monarch.



“Stand aside, woman!” cried the friar, authoritatively.

Unable to disobey the injunction, she retreated in terror to the side of the room.

Advancing to the couch, Father Sylvius laid his hand on Edward’s shoulder.

For a moment, the king did not stir; but at length he opened his eyes, and fixed them upon the intruder.

“Who art thou?” demanded Edward.

“Dost thou not know me?” rejoined the monk.

And throwing back his hood, he disclosed a well-remembered face.

“ ‘Tis Alban Shore!” said the king.

“Ay; ‘tis that much-injured man,” rejoined the friar.

“I confess I have wronged thee,” said Edward, feebly; “but I will make amends.”

“Thou canst not make me amends,” rejoined Shore. “As David took Bath-Sheba, the wife of Urijah, the Hittite, so thou hast taken my wife from me.”

Edward answered with a groan.

“I would thou hadst slain me with the sword, as David slew Urijah,” pursued Shore; “then had I been spared many years of misery! Hearken to me, oh, king! In this dread hour, when thy life is drawing to a close, and when nought can save thee, thou repentest thee of the great wrong thou hast done; but thy repentance comes too late.”

“No; not too late!” murmured Jane.
“Heaven is always merciful!”

“Who spoke?” said Edward.

“She whom thou hast destroyed,” replied Shore. “But neither she nor thou art penitent, and both shall perish!”

“Say what thou wilt to me,” cried Jane,
“but torment not the king!”

“Back, woman!” exclaimed Shore, fiercely. “Thy place is no longer here. Thy days of sinful pleasure are over. Henceforth thou wilt be shunned; for the arm that has shielded thee will soon be powerless, and those who praised thee will revile thee. Vainly wilt thou flee. Thou canst not escape from the punishment that awaits thee. A curse will cling to thee, and hold thee fast!”

Half stunned, Jane looked at him in terror, but could not speak.

“Call the guard!” groaned Edward.

“Ay; call the guard!” said Shore. “Complete thy work, and cause me to be put to death. I care not. I have had my revenge.”

“As thou dost hope for mercy thy-

self, show some mercy to me!" implored Jane.

"My heart is adamant," rejoined Shore. "There is pity in it neither for thee nor for the king."

"Oh," exclaimed Jane, "this is too much!"

And she sank down insensible at the foot of the couch.

"Wretch! thou hast killed her!" cried Edward.

"No; she will revive presently," said Shore. "But it were better for her that she died now than hereafter. She will have to drain the cup of misery to the dregs."

"How know'st thou this, thou prophet of evil?" said the king.

"How do I know it?" cried Shore. "Be-

cause I have prayed that it may be so, and my prayer will be granted ! She whom thou hast fed with the choicest viands, and clothed with the richest attire, will die of starvation, and almost without raiment ! A ban will be upon her ! No one will aid her !—all will shun her ! Thus will the great king's favourite perish !”

“At least, thou shalt perish before her !” cried Edward.

And raising himself with great difficulty, he called out, “Without there ! Hoh !”

The effort was too much, and he fell back on the pillows.

IX.

THE KING'S LAST GIFTS TO JANE.

IN answer to the king's summons, Doctor Lewis, accompanied by half a dozen pages, pushed into the room.

"What would your majesty?" cried the physician.

"Seize on that friar!" said Edward. "Deliver him to the guard."

"No friar is here, my liege," replied the physician, thinking the king was delirious.

"Can he have vanished?" cried Edward,

gazing round, and unable to discern his tormentor.

“No one has entered the room, my liege, or gone forth—of that I am certain,” said the physician. “I have been in the antechamber throughout the night.”

“It must have been the fiend in person,” said Edward.

“Doubtless your majesty has been troubled by a dream,” said the physician, confirmed in his notion that the king was light-headed.

“It may be so,” said Edward. “Ha! here is the proof that it was real,” pointing to Jane, who had been partly concealed by the hangings of the bed. “Get restoratives quickly.”

“I have all that is needful with me, sire,” replied Doctor Lewis.

And kneeling down beside Jane, he raised her head, and allowing her to breathe at a smelling - bottle which he produced, she quickly regained consciousness. He then assisted her to a seat.

"Clear the room," said Edward, in a low voice, to Doctor Lewis. "I have something to say to you."

And at a sign from the physician, all the pages went forth.

"Shall I go likewise, sire?" said Jane.

"No," replied Edward. "Stay with me a little longer."

It was a dread moment.

The physician's hand was upon the king's pulse. His eye was upon the king's countenance.

Jane watched him with intense anxiety, but she could read nothing in his impassive features.

At length the examination was over, and the king, who had remained perfectly calm, said to the physician:

“Let me know my fate.”

“Sire” replied the physician, gravely, “I will not attempt to conceal from your majesty that there is great danger——”

“I understand,” said Edward, seeing that he hesitated to proceed. “You can give me no hope?”

“I would have your majesty prepare for the worst,” said Doctor Lewis, somewhat evasively.

During the pause that ensued, Jane vainly endeavoured to stifle her sobs.

The silence was broken by the king.

In a firm voice he said :

“How many hours are left me? Fear not to tell me the truth.”

“Sire,” replied the physician, “unless

some change takes place—of which I despair—you will not see another night."

The tone in which this dread announcement was uttered forbade all hope.

Unable to repress her anguish, Jane buried her face in her hands, and wept aloud.

"Leave me for a few minutes," said Edward to the physician.

"Constrain yourself, I pray you, sire, or you will abridge the little time left you," said Doctor Lewis.

"Jane!" said the king, as soon as they were alone.

She arose instantly, and stood by his side.

Taking her hand, and gazing at her with inexpressible tenderness, Edward said :

"We must now part for ever, sweetheart."

“Our separation will not be long, sire,” she replied. “I shall soon follow you.”

“No, sweetheart,” he said; “you must live. Be constant to my memory—that is all I ask.”

“I cannot live without your majesty,” she cried, despairingly.

“You have never yet disobeyed me, Jane,” he said; “and I am well assured you will not disobey my last injunction. Indulge not in unavailing sorrow, but think of the happy hours we have spent together, and of the love I have ever borne you. Methinks I have amply provided for you; but if you desire aught more, it shall be yours.”

“You have already done too much for me, sire,” she cried.

“ ’Tis well. I signed that order on the Treasury to-day,” pursued Edward. “Fail

not to present it early in the morn to the Marquis of Dorset, and obtain the money. After my death some difficulties may be raised. How is this? You look embarrassed!"

"Sire," she replied, "I must not conceal from you that the warrant you gave me is lost."

"Lost!" exclaimed the king. "Impossible!"

"Your majesty may remember that I attended you to the door," said Jane. "When I came back the warrant was gone, and I have not been able to find it since. But do not let the matter disturb you. I shall not require the money."

"Jane," cried the king, with a troubled look, "strange misgivings cross me. My designs to benefit you seem unaccountably



thwarted. I see not why the warrant should be stolen, save from a mischievous motive, since it is useless to any other than yourself. To-morrow, if I live so long, the Lord Treasurer shall pay you the money. Meantime, takes these," he added, giving her a splendid chain set with diamonds, and some other ornaments lying on a small table near the bed. "Take them, I insist," he added, forcing the articles upon her.

Just then the physician entered the room.

"Never wert thou so unwelcome!" cried Edward. "Yet, since you have come, bear witness that I have given these ornaments to Mistress Shore."

"Bear witness, also, that I receive them most reluctantly," said Jane; "and only do so because I would not willingly distress his majesty."

"I shall not forget what I am told," rejoined the physician.

"Now that the moment for separation has arrived," cried Jane, "I feel I have left much unsaid that I ought to say to your majesty. Grant me a few more minutes, I beseech you, good master physician!"

"Be brief, then, madame, I implore you," said Doctor Lewis, removing to the further part of the room, so as to be out of hearing.

"If it be possible, sire," said Jane, addressing the king in a low, earnest voice, "to effect a sincere reconciliation between Lord Rivers and the Marquis of Dorset, and the Duke of Buckingham and the Lord Hastings and Stanley, it might prevent future troubles."

"It shall be done," rejoined Edward.

“Unluckily, Lord Rivers is at Ludlow Castle with the Prince of Wales, but the queen will answer for him. I will force the others to become friends.”

“I scarce have courage to make the next suggestion, but I must not hesitate. Appoint the queen Regent, during Prince Edward’s minority, sire. She will govern wisely and well.”

“I doubt it not,” rejoined the king.
“But Gloucester must be Lord Protector.”

“No, sire!” said Jane. “Let Gloucester have no authority!”

“You hate him!” said the king.

“I hate him because he is false to your majesty, and seeks to mount the throne. Give the queen full power, and she will be able to guard the prince against his perfidious uncle—not otherwise.”

"It shall be so," replied Edward. "If all this can be accomplished, I shall die in peace; but I feel my strength is fast failing me."

Fearing, from his words, that he was sinking, Jane called to the physician, who flew to the couch. But the king quickly rallied.

"You must not remain with me longer, Jane," he murmured. "Farewell—farewell for ever."

She felt as if her heart would break; but, restraining herself by a powerful effort, she stooped down, kissed him, and quitted the room.

How she regained her own apartments she knew not, for she seemed to be in a state of stupefaction.

Seeing her condition, her female attend-

ants induced her to lie down, and she soon fell into a profound slumber, from which she did not waken until mid-day.

Her first inquiries were for the king, and she learnt the terrible truth from the looks of her attendants, who vainly strove to conceal it from her.

X.

HOW KING EDWARD'S BODY WAS EXPOSED TO PUBLIC VIEW
ON THE DAY OF HIS DEATH IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

ON a high catafalque, conspicuously placed in the centre of the nave at Westminster Abbey, and covered with a black velvet pall, edged with silver, and embroidered with the royal badges, the falcon and fetterlock, the rose and sun, and the white hart, lay the lifeless body of the king, who had only breathed his last at an early hour on the same day.

Bared to the waist, the noble-proportioned

tioned frame of the deceased monarch looked as if sculptured in whitest marble, and was full of subdued dignity, repose, grace, and resignation, which gave to his features a peculiar charm.

Over the lower part of the person was thrown an ample cover of cloth of silver, and the head rested upon a large pillow of black satin fringed with silver. Even in death, the majestic features of the king retained their proud expression and beautiful outline.

Immense tapers of yellow wax, set in tall silver candlesticks, burnt at the corners of the catafalque. Youthful incense-bearers, swinging heavy censers, continually fumed the body. Dignitaries of the abbey knelt around, and a solemn requiem was sung by the choir, while the deep tones of the organ

ever and anon pealed along the vaulted roof.

From pillar to pillar, along the aisles, and in the transept, magnificent arras was stretched, so that a full view of the royal body could only be obtained from certain points indicated by gentlemen ushers provided with white wands.

Yeomen of the guard were likewise stationed at the entrance to the choir, and at the various chapels, to prevent intrusion ; but the deportment of the crowd was singularly quiet and decorous.

Around the catafalque a clear space was kept by halberdiers, stationed some two feet apart, so as not to obstruct the view ; the tallest and finest men being selected for the occasion.

Within the circle thus formed, and which

was strictly guarded by the halberdiers, who crossed their pikes when needful, several distinguished personages were gathered ; the chief among them being Lord Hastings, the Grand Chamberlain, by whom the solemn ceremonial was conducted, the Duke of Buckingham, and Lord Stanley, the Marquis of Dorset, Lord Gray, and the queen's chamberlain, Lord Dacre.

Besides these, there were the Lord Mayor, the sheriffs, and aldermen, in their full robes, and several of the important citizens, who had banqueted recently with Edward in the adjacent palace.

Another personage was likewise allowed a place within the circle, although his parti-coloured garments seemed out of character with the scene. This was Malbouche. The jester, whose office was gone, wore a most

rueful countenance, and perhaps no one among the assemblage more sincerely regretted his royal master than the poor knave.

All the nobles just mentioned were members of the Council—the Marquis of Dorset and Lord Gray, the queen's sons by her first marriage, holding the chief places; and they had judged it expedient, in consequence of the suddenness of the king's death, that the body should be exposed in the manner described—first, to convince the somewhat incredulous populace that his majesty was actually dead; and secondly, that he had come fairly by his end.

A like course had been pursued with regard to the unfortunate Henry the Sixth, whose remains were exhibited in Saint Paul's; but in that case, the murdered

king was placed in a coffin, and covered up, so that the face alone could be distinguished. No requiem was then sang, and no sympathising spectator was permitted to approach the mangled corpse, from which, it was said, blood burst forth.

On the present occasion every possible honour was paid to the departed monarch. Masses were performed, and dirges sung. Every countenance bespoke sorrow, for those who entertained other feelings did not dare to manifest them. If not deeply mourned, Edward was sincerely regretted. Whatever may have been his faults, he had won the regard of his subjects, and his popularity was at its zenith when he was prematurely cut off. Many a tearful glance was cast at his noble person. Many a prayer was breathed for the repose of his soul. If

he had been a slave to his passions, and was sullied by many crimes, he had some redeeming qualities, and these were now remembered, and his evil deeds forgotten. He was thought of as a brave warrior, and a magnificent monarch. That he had been cruel and rapacious could not be denied, but he had only slain his enemies, and confiscated their property—venial offences in the opinion of men who had lived during the sanguinary Wars of the Roses.

The regrets felt for the loss of the king were heightened by fears for the future—great anxiety being felt in regard to the new Government. That the queen would attempt to rule in the name of her youthful son, the Prince of Wales, no one doubted; but that she would long maintain sovereign sway seemed very questionable. Unfor-

tunately for herself, Elizabeth had no party, except her own relatives, and certain new-made peers, who were detested by the old nobility, and disliked by the people.

While Edward lived, the queen had been omnipotent, because he granted all her requests, and upheld her family. Deprived of his support, she had little authority. As we just intimated, her brother, the Earl of Rivers, and her sons by her first marriage—the Marquis of Dorset and Lord Gray—were prominent members of the Council; but Buckingham, Hastings, and Stanley, three most powerful nobles, were hostile to her, and it was certain she would have to contend with Gloucester, whose partisans were already at work, suggesting that she was not lawfully married to the king, and that her sons, being illegitimate, could not succeed to the crown.

Such a prospect did not bode future tranquillity.

Another matter, likewise, occupied the crowd, and gave rise to much muttered discussion. The suddenness of the king's death excited suspicion that he had been poisoned at the grand banquet given by him only two days previously; but by whom, or at whose instigation, the deadly potion was administered, none ventured to affirm.

By common consent the queen was entirely acquitted of any participation in the dark deed; but suspicion attached to Gloucester, who was likely to be the gainer by his royal brother's removal, and who was known to be capable of such an atrocious act.

Amongst those near the catafalque was a

Franciscan friar, who had obtained admittance at the same time as Malbouche.

Kneeling down, he appeared to pray fervently for the departed monarch, but was not so much engrossed by his devotions as he seemed. He had contrived to place himself near Buckingham and Hastings, and a good deal of their discourse, though carried on in a low tone, reached his ear. This was what he overheard.

“Before this hour to-morrow,” said Buckingham, “the express whom I ordered to ride for his life will reach York, and the Duke of Gloucester will be made aware of the king’s death. I have written to inform him, but that Rivers, Dorset, and Gray are certain to dispute his claim, inasmuch as the king, in his latest moments, appointed the queen to be Regent, with full powers.

I added that unless he can secure the custody of the young king, who is now at Ludlow Castle with his uncle, Lord Rivers, his highness's chance of the Protectorship is irretrievably lost. I told him he might depend on our support, and that we can offer him a corps of a thousand soldiers, well armed, and ready to march at a moment's notice."

"His highness must not lose time," replied Hastings. "I have ascertained that the queen has despatched a courier to Lord Rivers, with tidings of the king's death, enjoining his lordship to levy troops immediately in Wales, to enable him to conduct his royal nephew safely to London for the coronation."

"Ere the young king can reach London he must be in Gloucester's hands, or we

are lost," observed Buckingham, significantly. But how came Edward to give the queen uncontrolled authority? He always declared that Gloucester should be Protector."

"And Gloucester would be Protector now," replied Hastings, "had not Mistress Shore induced the dying king to appoint her majesty Regent."

"By acting thus injudiciously, Mistress Shore will make a mortal enemy of Gloucester, and gain nothing for the queen," remarked Buckingham.

"To do her justice, I believe her motives were good," said Hastings.

"Now that the king has gone, her power has departed from her," said Buckingham. "But no doubt she has enriched herself."

“ ‘Tis her own fault if she has not,” rejoined Hastings. “ But she is really disinterested, and I incline to think she has not availed herself of the many opportunities offered her of becoming wealthy. However, the influence she enjoyed is gone, as she will speedily discover. Suitors will no longer throng her ante-chamber—courtiers will shun her.”

“ ‘Tis a hard fate, I must own, to be raised to such an eminence, and then cast down,” observed Buckingham. “ But Mistress Shore can go back to her husband, if he is still in existence.”

“ No ; that is impossible !” said Hastings, “ The crazy goldsmith has not been heard of since his wife left him.”

Just then, perceiving the Lord Mayor, who had come up in the interim, he said to him :

“Can your lordship inform me what has become of Alban Shore, the goldsmith?”

“That is a question I cannot answer,” replied the other. “Possibly he may now reappear. Should he not do so, we may conclude him dead. But if he still lives he must be poor, for all his money was given away in charities. At one time I envied Shore his good fortune in gaining such a lovely wife, but I have since esteemed myself the luckier man; though had I been in his place I would not have taken her abandonment of me so much to heart.”

“Perchance, you loved her not as well as Shore loved her, my lord,” remarked Hastings. “But she had many suitors besides yourself, I remember.”

“Very true,” replied the Lord Mayor.

“And, strange to say, they were all at the last banquet given by the king—stranger still, they are all here to-day.”

“The party would have been complete had Shore been present on the last occasion,” observed Buckingham.

“Or were he here now,” said the Lord Mayor. “Mistress Shore has lost none of her beauty. I know not how others feel, but for my own part I confess I am as much in love with her as ever.”

“Twould have been treason to make this avowal two days ago, my lord,” said Buckingham. “But you may now succeed the king in her favour.”

Before the Lord Mayor could make any reply, the friar, who seemed disturbed by the discourse, arose from his kneeling posture, and without raising his hood, said, in a hollow voice :

“Alban Shore is not dead!”

“How know’st thou that?” said the Lord Mayor.

“No matter how I know it,” replied the friar. “I affirm that Alban Shore still lives. But he is not likely to trouble his wife.”

“Thou must give me precise information on this point at a more convenient season,” observed the Lord Mayor.

“Willingly,” replied the monk.

And bowing his head, he moved to a little distance.

Just then, the Marquis of Dorset came up, and without noticing either of the two nobles, who eyed him haughtily, said to the Lord Mayor :

“It has just been decided by the Council, as no doubt your lordship has been given

to understand, that the young king will be proclaimed to-morrow."

"Orders to that effect have already been given, my lord," replied the Lord Mayor; "and I will see them carried out in person. At noon to-morrow, King Edward the Fifth will be proclaimed at Paul's Cross, at the Cross at Cheapside, and at other public places. 'Tis too soon as yet, I suppose, to speak of the coronation?"

"The coronation will take place immediately after the arrival of his youthful majesty in London," replied Dorset. "As soon as a sufficient escort can be provided, he will commence his journey from Ludlow Castle."

"I should have thought a very small escort would be required, my lord," said the Lord Mayor. "Against whom is his youthful majesty to be defended?"

“Ay, who are his enemies?” demanded Hastings, sternly. “Not his brave and loyal uncle, the Duke of Gloucester; not the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Stanley, or myself, who are all devoted to him, and ready to lay down our lives in his defence. Methinks the guard is required to confirm the power of Lord Rivers, rather than to protect the young king.”

“I care not what you think, my lord,” rejoined Dorset, haughtily. “No precautionary measures will be neglected. The queen is well aware that the Duke of Buckingham and yourself are in secret communication with the Duke of Gloucester.”

“Does her majesty distrust us?” demanded Buckingham.

“I do,” replied Dorset. “Therefore, the young king will have an army to guard him. Forget not that I hold the Tower,

and am head of the Council, in the absence of Lord Rivers. My Lord Mayor," he added to that dignitary, "the queen counts upon your loyalty and devotion to the king, her son."

"Her majesty may entirely rely on me, my lord," replied the Lord Mayor.

With a look of defiance at Buckingham and Hastings, the Marquis of Dorset then moved away.

"I thought a reconciliation had taken place between your lordships and the queen's family," observed the Lord Mayor.

"We shook hands at the king's request, and vowed to be good friends, and this is the result," rejoined Buckingham. "Your lordship shall have a full explanation anon."

"I require no explanation, my lord,"

said the Lord Mayor. "I can see plainly enough what we may expect. My own course is clear. I shall side with neither party, but uphold King Edward the Fifth."

XL

HOW KING EDWARD THE FOURTH WAS INTERRED IN SAINT
GEORGE'S CHAPEL.

AFTER being exposed for nine hours to public gaze, the royal corpse was removed to a traverse, and robed in a long gown of purple cloth of gold. It was next placed in a large, open coffin, lined with white damask, and laid upon a bier before the high altar.

During the preparation for the latter part of the solemnity, the vast crowd collected within the nave and transepts was constrained to leave the abbey.

A strange and awful circumstance occurred at the time. Sir William Catesby had been appointed by the Lord Chamberlain to superintend the removal of the royal corpse. The office was distasteful to him, but he could not refuse it. When he approached, the bearers trembled, for they thought that a frown passed over the dead king's countenance.

Appalled by the occurrence, which he himself had noticed, Catesby drew back, whereupon the king's visage resumed its serene expression.

Catesby was standing aloof, unable to shake off this superstitious terror, when Malbouche came up to him and said, "I trow, Sir William, you have heard of the ordeal of touch?"

"Wherfore the question?" demanded Catesby.

“I would fain see you lay your hand upon the king’s body,” said Malbouche.
“Dare you do it?”

“Certes, I dare! What should hinder me? But I shall not do it to please thee.”

“Again, I say, you dare not touch the body,” cried Malbouche.

“Thou liest, knave!” exclaimed Catesby.

“To the proof, then!” said the jester.

Catesby stepped forward, with feigned boldness, but secret misgiving.

When he came up to the bier, the king’s countenance again seemed to change, and the conscience-stricken villain shrank back.

“Said I not you would not touch the body?” cried Malbouche.

Catesby made no reply.

When the bier sustaining the royal coffin

had been placed before the altar, which was lighted up by tall tapers, twenty-four bannerets and knights, in long black gowns and hoods, ranged themselves on either side to keep watch.

A mass of *Requiem* was then performed by the Abbot of Westminster, while the nobles and gentlemen knelt around. *De profundis* was likewise said. During the office, Lord Dacre offered for the queen; the young Earl of Lincoln, son of the Duchess of Suffolk, Edward's sister, likewise offered; and many others, including Dorset, Buckingham, and Hastings.

The whole psalter was recited, and the solemn service lasted till an hour after midnight, when another mass of *Requiem* was performed.

The coffin was then closed and borne by

the bannerets and knights through the choir, to the great porch, where a grand funeral car was waiting to receive it.

While the royal body was placed in the car, the bell of the abbey began to toll, and a long procession was formed, comprising the monks, the abbot, the Archbishop of York, who was likewise Chancellor, the chief nobles, with the Lord Mayor, the sheriffs and aldermen.

The funeral train was preceded by a mounted guard of archers and yeomen of the guard, bearing torches. On either side of the funeral car walked the Marquis of Dorset, and the Lords Gray, Dacre, and Lincoln, holding the pall. A long train of nobles and gentlemen followed, walking two and two.

Seen by the light of the torches, as it

shaped it slow course from the abbey to the palace stairs, where a barge was in readiness to convey the royal corpse to Windsor, the procession formed a most striking spectacle, and despite the unseasonableness of the hour, was witnessed by an immense number of spectators, all of whom appeared greatly impressed.

The bell of the abbey continued to toll throughout, but no trumpets were blown, nor was any other sound heard.

Deposited within the barge, which was draped with black velvet, and decked with the royal arms, the king's coffin was watched throughout its nocturnal transit by the bannerets and knights. Tapers burnt at the head and foot of the bier, and priests recited prayers.

With the conveyance thus assigned to

the deceased monarch were five other state barges, all filled with various officials.

In the foremost of these, which preceded the royal body by a bow-shot, trumpeters were stationed, and their clarions were occasionally sounded to keep the river clear. The conduct of the ceremonial was entrusted by the queen to her chamberlain, Lord Dacre.

A short halt was made at Shene Palace, where all the royal attendants had come forth, with the seneschal, and loudly expressed their sorrow. But the most genuine manifestation of sorrow was made by Malbouche, who had been allowed by Lord Dacre to accompany the body of his royal master.

In the grey light of dawn, the royal corpse arrived at Windsor, and was at once

conveyed to Saint George's Hall, where it lay in state for three days.

Subsequently, the king was interred in Saint George's Chapel, the funeral obsequies being conducted with great pomp.

A lady, attired in deepest mourning, whose features were completely concealed by a thick veil, was conducted by Lord Dacre to a place within the chapel not far from the royal body.

This lady, who was evidently overwhelmed by affliction, knelt down and remained in a supplicating posture till the close of the ceremonial, when she was assisted from the chapel, almost in a fainting state, by the queen's Chamberlain.

End of Book the Fourth.

Book the Fifth.

THE ABBEY SANCTUARY.

I.

HOW JANE DEVOTED HERSELF TO THE QUEEN.

NEARLY a week had elapsed since Edward the Fourth was interred in Saint George's Chapel at Windsor.

Jane had been present at the funeral, as described ; but on her return that night to her apartments in Westminster Palace, she was seized with a violent illness, that threatened to deprive her of life or reason.

Owing to the sedulous care of Doctor Lewis, the late king's physician, she re-

covered; and on the sixth day, though still feeling very weak, she was able to sit up.

Then, for the first time, she assumed her mourning habits; and these being of black velvet, edged with white silk, and embroidered with silver, contrasted strongly with the unwonted paleness of her complexion. But, though bearing evident traces of deep affliction, her features appeared almost more interesting than they had done before this heavy blow had fallen upon her.

She was alone, and seated in a cabinet, communicating with a larger apartment, in which she had often sat with the king, and was thinking of him, and of the many happy hours they had passed together.

Alas! these happy hours were gone—

never to return! Deprived of him she had so deeply loved, she felt that life would henceforth be a blank; and she resolved to bury her woes in a convent, and seek to atone, by penance and prayer, for the faults she had committed.

She was still occupied by sad reflections—still thinking of the king—when a page entered, and said that a Franciscan friar was without, and prayed admittance, as he had somewhat of importance to communicate to her.

A feeling of misgiving crossed her at this announcement, but she ordered that the friar should be admitted.

When he came in, his hood was drawn over his face, so as to conceal his features, but she knew who it was.

As soon as the page had retired, the friar

took a parchment from his gown, and placed it on the table beside her.

As he did this, he said to Jane, who watched him in surprise :

“Here is the warrant for ten thousand marks given you by the king.”

Without a word more, he was about to depart, but Jane stopped him.

“My errand is done,” he said. “I would rather answer no questions.”

“Yet tell me, I pray you, by whom the warrant was taken, and with what design?” she cried.

“I took it not—let that suffice!” rejoined the friar.

“My suspicions alight on Alice Fordinham,” cried Jane. “Did she take it?”

“Question me not, I repeat!” he said. “Thus much I will tell you freely. It was

taken from vindictive motives, and not from desire of gain."

"What you say convinces me it was taken by Alice Fordham," rejoined Jane. "But I am perplexed to understand how the paper came into your hands!"

"No matter how I obtained it!" said the friar. "But for me the warrant would have been destroyed. If you desire the money—and ten thousand marks is a large sum—I counsel you to apply for it without delay to the Marquis of Dorset, keeper of the late king's treasure, or he may not be able to pay the amount to you. The Duke of Gloucester, who is no friend of yours, may prevent him!"

"The Duke of Gloucester!" exclaimed Jane, in alarm. "Is he in power? I pray you tell me! All news has been kept from

me during my illness, so that I really know nothing."

"Gloucester will soon be Lord Protector —rest assured of that!" rejoined the monk.
"The young king is in his hands, and he is bringing his royal nephew to London for the coronation."

Astounded by the intelligence, Jane sank back, and the friar quitted the room.

Shortly afterwards Doctor Lewis came in, and she eagerly questioned him.

"Is it true," she said, "that Lord Rivers has given up the young king to his evil-hearted, treacherous uncle, Gloucester? I cannot believe it!"

"'Tis true, nevertheless," rejoined the physician.

"And where is Buckingham?" cried Jane.

“With the Duke of Gloucester!” was the reply.

“I knew it!” cried Jane. “I knew he would be art and part in the treacherous scheme. And Lord Hastings — where is he?”

“In London, with the Council,” replied Doctor Lewis. “But he is hostile to the queen.”

“Ay, he and Buckingham are her majesty’s implacable enemies,” said Jane. “Oh, that I could help her in this emergency, when she has such powerful foes to contend with! Is her son, Lord Gray, with her?”

“Lord Gray was made prisoner by Gloucester at the same time as his uncle, Lord Rivers,” replied the physician. “He had been sent to Ludlow Castle with a letter

Book the Fifth.

THE ABBEY SANCTUARY.

may avail to preserve for him his father's crown, which a usurper would snatch from his brow! Grant, O Heavenly Power! that I may be enabled to accomplish this; and when the task I desire to undertake is finished, I hereby solemnly vow to devote the remainder of my life to Thy service!"

Uttered with an earnestness and fervour that left no doubt of the sincerity of the suppliant, this prayer produced a strong effect upon a person who had entered the cabinet at the very moment when Jane knelt down, but would not come forward, being unwilling to interrupt her.

It was a tall, stately dame, of a very commanding presence, habited in magnificent mourning. On her brow was a white frontlet that covered her beautiful

tresses, and on the lower part of her face was a plaited linen covering, called a barbe. Though her noble features looked sorrowful, it was sorrow mingled with pride and anger.

As soon as Jane became aware of the presence of her august visitor, she arose, and made a profound obeisance to her.

“I have come to you in my distress,” said the widowed queen, “and have heard enough to convince me that you will serve me and my sons, so far as lies in your power.”

“That I will, gracious madame,” replied Jane, earnestly. “I will lay down my life for you and them!”

“There is no one but yourself with whom I can take counsel, and on whom I can rely,” pursued the queen. “I am deprived

of the help of my brother, Lord Rivers, and of my sons, the Marquis of Dorset and Lord Gray. Rivers and Gray are prisoners, and Dorset cannot quit the Tower at this terrible juncture. Doubtless you are aware of the grave fault I committed in ordering Lord Rivers to dismiss the escort he had provided for the young king. But for that fatal error my son would now be here, and, with him in my own keeping, I should be able to set my enemies at defiance. The step taken by Gloucester is only part of a plan, the end of which is the destruction of all my children."

"Such is my own opinion, madame," observed Jane, mournfully.

"We are not safe within the palace," pursued the queen, "since I have no guard to defend me, should an attempt be made—

as is most likely—to seize upon my second son, the Duke of York. Whither shall I fly?"

"I have advised her majesty to take refuge with her children in the Abbey Sanctuary," observed Doctor Lewis. "But she hesitates, lest it should seem she is alarmed."

"The measure, though repugnant to your feelings, is absolutely necessary, gracious madame," urged Jane. "Yourself and your children will then be secure, for even Gloucester will not dare to violate a sacred asylum, the privileges of which have been recognised for centuries by popes and kings. Therefore you will be far safer in the Abbey Sanctuary than if you took refuge in the Tower with your son, the Marquis of Dorset, or in any other strong castle, where you

might be besieged. Moreover, while you have the young Duke of York with you, the king is safe, for if the elder brother be put to death, the younger becomes king."

" You have convinced me," said the queen. " I will take all my children at once to the Sanctuary. Nor will I stir thence till this danger be past."

" You have well resolved, madame," said the physician, approvingly.

" If you do not disdain my services, gracious madame, I would offer to accompany you," said Jane, " and I may be able to render you some little assistance. I will bring with me all the money and jewels I possess. They are yours."

" You make a great sacrifice," said the queen; " and I fully appreciate it. I accept the offer, because I may need money, and

I have little, and can obtain none from the Marquis of Dorset."

"Here's a warrant for ten thousand marks," said Jane, pointing to the paper.
"Will it avail your majesty?"

"Tis useless now," said the queen; "yet keep it—better days may come."

"For me no better days can come," rejoined Jane, mournfully. "I have no desire left save to see your majesty and your children righted. When that happens—as, with Heaven's grace, it will happen—I shall have done with the world."

"Rejoin me in the Sanctuary," said the queen. "Bring with you such attendants as you need, and all matters you require. I will now go and give orders to my own servants to prepare at once for the removal."

“I will attend to your instructions, madame,” said Jane, making a profound obeisance to the queen, as her majesty withdrew.

Seeing that Jane looked scarcely equal to the effort, the physician promised to return and help her, as soon as he had attended the queen to her apartments.

II.

HOW THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK BROUGHT THE GREAT
SEAL TO THE QUEEN.

“I MAKE it known to all generations of the world after me, that, by special commandment of our holy father, Pope Leo, I have renewed and honoured the holy church of the blessed apostle, Saint Peter, at Westminster. And I order and establish for ever, that any person, of what condition or estate soever he be, from wheresoever he come, or for what offence or cause it be, if he shall take refuge in the said holy place, he be as-

sured of his life, liberty, and limbs. Moreover, I forbid, under pain of everlasting damnation, that any minister of mine, or of my successors, shall intermeddle with any goods, lands, or possessions of the said persons taking the said Sanctuary. For I take their goods and livelihood into my special protection, and, therefore, grant to every and each of them, insomuch as my terrestrial power may suffice, all manner of freedom and joyous liberty. And whosoever shall presume or do contrary to this my grant, I ordain that he lose his name, worship, dignity, and power. And I will that this my grant endure as long as there remaineth in England either love or dread of Christian name."

Such were the terms of the charter whereby the great privilege of Sanctuary,

originally granted to the Abbey Church of Westminster by Sebert, King of the East Saxons, was confirmed by Edward the Confessor in the middle of the eleventh century.

From that date to the period of our story, the privilege continued in full force, and endured long afterwards, until its gross abuse necessitated entire suppression.

Nor was the privilege of Sanctuary confined merely to the abbey, but extended to its precincts, within which the Abbot's Palace was included.

In this large monastic mansion, then some three centuries old, the unfortunate queen was lodged.

Registered, with all her children, according to the customary form, as Sanctuary persons, she was now safe. It was not the first time she had been compelled by ad.

verse circumstances to seek an asylum in the Abbot's Palace. Indeed, the young king, her son, was born there, in 1470, when Edward was driven from the kingdom by Warwick.

Seated in a large stone hall, panelled at one end with oak, and hung with arras, the queen was watching her serving-men, who had been busily engaged throughout the night in bringing chests, coffers, and other articles to the Sanctuary.

The torches that illumined the hall showed a great quantity of chests and household stuff piled on the floor, and also revealed the sad figure of the queen, as she sat there alone.

Neither children nor attendants were with her. The young Duke of York and the five princesses, his sisters, had long

since retired to rest. Jane, also, who had followed the royal lady to the Sanctuary, and had stayed with her to a late hour, rendering all the assistance she could, had at last yielded to fatigue, and was now slumbering in a chair in another part of the hall.

The queen would not quit her post, but sat there throughout the night, noting each chest as it was brought in and laid down before her.

She was wrapped in a black velvet robe ; and her splendid tresses, being unbound, streamed over her shoulders.

On the table near which she sat were a lamp and a missal ; but her eyes seldom rested on the book of prayer.

Thus the night had passed—one of the weariest and saddest nights the queen had

ever spent—and dawn was close at hand, when a noise outside roused her from the apathetic state in which she had sunk, and filled her with alarm. Who but an enemy could come there at that hour?

It was not an enemy, however, but a friend. It was the Archbishop of York, who was likewise Lord Chancellor, that entered the hall.

The palace of the archbishop adjoined the abbey, so he had not far to come. Short, however, as was the distance, he brought with him several armed attendants, and it was the noise they made, while stationing themselves at the door of the hall, that had alarmed the queen.

An officer of the archbishop's household followed his grace, carrying a purple velvet bag, embroidered with the royal arms.

On recognising her visitor, the queen arose, and received him with as much dignity as if she had been in her own palace.

“I did not think to see your grace at this hour,” she said. “But you are always welcome, and never more welcome than now, for I am sure you come to me as a friend.”

“I bring you news that I trust will give you comfort, madame. Not half an hour ago I was wakened from my sleep by a messenger from Lord Hastings, who told me that your majesty need be under no apprehension, for all would yet be well. Thereupon, I attired myself in haste, and came hither with the message.”

“And does your grace attach credit to it?” cried the queen. “I believe nothing that comes from Hastings. He is my deadly

enemy, and seeks to destroy me and my children. He thinks by these false messages, sent through a friend so loyal and true-hearted as your grace, that he will induce me to quit this asylum, and place myself in Gloucester's power, but I will disappoint him. Here I will stay until the king, my son, is crowned, and invites me to come forth from my refuge."

"I do not counsel you to leave the Sanctuary, gracious madame," rejoined the archbishop. "But I think you judge Lord Hastings harshly. I admit he is not your friend, but he was devoted to the king, your husband, and his zeal and attachment are now transferred to the young king, your son. Rest assured he would not harm your children."

"He is the chief accomplice in this plot

with Gloucester to deprive my son of the crown," said the queen. "He has selected your grace as his messenger, because he knows the great confidence I have in you, and the great respect in which I hold you. But tell him that I doubt him—nay more, that I know him to be false and treacherous. Bid your attendant retire for a moment, for I have somewhat to say to you in private."

At a sign from the archbishop, the officer retired to a short distance, so as to be out of hearing.

"What would you say to me, madame?" asked the archbishop.

"I believe Gloucester will kill the king, my son," she rejoined, in a low, deep voice.

"I cannot penetrate Gloucester's designs,

madame," rejoined the archbishop; "but the dark deed would avail him little. Were the king, your son, murdered to-day, to-morrow I would crown his brother, the Duke of York."

"I see your grace is truly loyal," cried the queen.

"Your majesty shall have unquestionable proof of my fidelity," said the archbishop.

Then, signing to the officer to come forward, he bade him place the embroidered velvet bag upon the table.

"Lo! there, madame," said his grace—"there is the Great Seal of England, the badge of regal power, without which nothing of moment in State affairs can be done. The king, your husband, gave me the seal, and I hereby return it to you.

Keep it for King Edward's sons, and secure their right. Could stronger proof of my loyalty and devotion be given, I would give it."

"My lord, you have done enough," replied the queen, in accents of heartfelt gratitude. "You have raised fresh hopes in my breast. With Heaven's aid I shall yet triumph over my enemies."

"Doubt it not, gracious madame," replied the archbishop. "It glads me that I have brought consolation to your anxious breast. Seek some repose, I entreat you. You need it much. Later on in the day we will confer together again. Till then, farewell."

"I pray your grace to give me your blessing ere you go," said the queen.

And as she bent down, the archbishop

stretched his arms over her, and exclaimed fervently :

“ Heaven bless your majesty, and guard you and your children from all ill ! ”

As the queen arose, he quitted the hall with his attendant.

No sooner was he gone than the queen clapped her hands.

The sound awoke Jane, who sprang from the chair on which she had slept, and flew towards her.

“ What would your majesty ? ” she cried.

“ Bring that bag to my chamber. It contains the Great Seal of England.”

“ Is the seal for your younger son ? ” asked Jane.

“ Time will show,” replied the queen.

III.

THE ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER.

JANE occupied a chamber situated in the upper part of the Abbot's Palace, and looking down upon a beautiful little flower garden adjoining the inner court.

Being greatly fatigued, she did not rise till late, and had just attired herself, when, hearing voices beneath, she went to the window, which had been thrown open by her attendant.

On one side of the secluded little garden

rose the grey monastic mansion—on the other, the buttresses and pinnacles of the abbey.

A more charming retreat cannot be conceived, and in it the abbot was wont to spend many hours in each day, but he now left it to the queen and her family.

In this little garden, shut round by high stone walls, but still trim, and well kept, the royal children were collected.

Apparently the youthful captives were not much cast down, for their voices sounded cheerfully, and occasionally a light laugh was heard.

On looking forth, Jane perceived the Duke of York playing with his younger sisters, and chasing them along the narrow gravel walks.

Near a sun-dial, placed in the centre of

the trim parterre, stood the Princess Elizabeth and the Princess Cicely. The countenances of both these lovely damsels had a sad expression.

All the party were in mourning.

Jane watched the scene with great interest—an interest deepened by the anxiety she felt for the safety of the young prince, who seemed unconscious of any danger.

After sporting with his younger sisters for some time, the Duke of York came up to the two princesses standing near the sundial, and asked them if they would not play with him.

Both declined, and told him he had had sufficient pastime.

“I would the king, my brother, were here to play with me!” he said.

“I would he were, for then he would be

out of the power of our cruel uncle, the Duke of Gloucester," remarked the Princess Elizabeth. "I fear we shall never behold our dear brother again."

"Should Gloucester kill him, I shall be king, and then I will put Gloucester himself to death," cried the young duke.

"It would be far better if we could find some means of delivering Edward from our uncle's power," said the Princess Cicely.

"Why does not Edward try to escape, and come to us?" cried the Duke of York.

"The attempt would be useless. He is too strictly guarded," replied the Princess Elizabeth. "Take care you never get into our uncle Gloucester's hands, Richard, or he will shut you up in the Tower."

“He cannot force me hence!” said the young duke. “And the Lord Chancellor has given the queen the Great Seal, without which nothing can be done.”

“Alas! the Lord Chancellor has sent for it back!” said Elizabeth.

“But surely the queen refused to give it up?” cried the young duke. “I would not have returned it.”

“Her majesty judged otherwise, and she knows best,” said Elizabeth, sadly. “But be it for good or ill, the Great Seal is gone.”

This was news to Jane, and it greatly distressed her. She could neither account for the queen’s imprudence, nor understand why the Archbishop of York should have acted thus.

But she was much more alarmed by what presently occurred.

The young duke and his sisters had resumed their play, when the Abbot of Westminster, attended by three or four monks, entered the garden.

On seeing him, the Duke of York immediately stopped in his sport, and made the abbot a low reverence.

“I am sent to conduct your highness to the queen, your mother,” said the abbot. “The Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury is with her majesty.”

“My mind misgives me, holy father!” interposed the Princess Elizabeth. “Me thinks the cardinal has come to take away my brother?”

“Tis true, princess,” rejoined the abbot.

“But I will not go with him,” cried the Duke of York, resolutely.

“What the queen, your mother, enjoins, your highness will do, knowing it to be for the best. Of that I am firmly persuaded,” said the abbot. “Your royal uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, having been appointed Protector by the Council, and having the care and guardianship of the king, deems it improper that two brothers, hitherto brought up together, should be separated, and he has therefore sent to the queen demanding that you be delivered up, and brought to the king your brother, who is most wishful to have you with him. Your highness will then be at liberty, whereas you are now in prison, and the Lord Protector and the Council hold it dishonourable to the king

and to yourself that you should continue to remain in this Sanctuary."

"I will answer for my brother, holy father!" said the Princess Elizabeth. "It can be no dishonour to the king or the Duke of York that the duke should be with his mother, and in an asylum where he is safe from his enemies. Would to Heaven the king, my brother, were with us! I should then feel far easier than I do now!"

"My errand, princess, is to conduct the duke to the queen," replied the abbot. "If you and the princesses, your sisters, choose to come with us, you will learn her majesty's decision."

With this he took the young duke's hand, and led him out of the garden.

The Princess Elizabeth and her sisters

followed—all looking very sad, and the three youngest weeping.

The monks brought up the rear of the little procession.

Guessing whither they were going, Jane hurried down a circular stone staircase, and reached the great hall before them.

IV.

HOW THE QUEEN DELIVERED UP THE DUKE OF YORK TO
CARDINAL BOURCHIER AND THE LORDS.

AT the upper end of the large chamber, which was still encumbered with chests and household goods, sat the queen.

Her majesty was conferring with Cardinal Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was accompanied by Lord Howard, and several other nobles.

The cardinal had a very imposing presence, the effect of which was heightened by his rich attire and hat. His person was

large, and his features strongly marked and characterised rather by pride than benignity.

A long and angry discussion had taken place between his eminence and the queen, in which the cardinal, partly by persuasion, partly by menace, strove to induce her to deliver up her son.

“Madame,” said the cardinal, finding it impossible to move her, “I am but a messenger, with these lords, to ascertain your pleasure. You have branded us all with disloyalty and treachery, and have imputed a most execrable design to the Lord Protector. For ourselves, we can avouch that we are loyal and true to the young prince, your son; and we dare avouch, also, that the Lord Protector is equally true to his royal nephew, and means him no harm by

removing him from this Sanctuary, and placing him with the king, his brother, but much good. Madame, I have done, and pray you to come to a speedy decision."

These words, and the tone in which they were uttered, produced a great effect upon the queen, and shook her firmness.

She knew not how to act for the best. She did not for a moment believe that the cardinal and the lords with him, though hostile to herself, would be accessory to the destruction of her son ; but she feared the Protector.

Still, if Gloucester were resolved to violate the Sanctuary, and take away the young duke by force, she could not prevent him. Since opposition would be useless, she judged it the wisest course to yield.

At this painful juncture, the abbot en-

tered the hall with the young duke, followed by the princesses.

On beholding her son, the queen immediately arose, and went to meet him.

Disengaging himself from the abbot, the prince flew towards her. She caught him in her arms, and covered him with kisses.

“ You will not let them take me away, dearest mother ? ” he said.

She strained him to her breast ; and the young duke, becoming alarmed, repeated the question.

“ There is no help. You must go, my sweet son,” replied the almost heart-broken mother. “ Were I to keep you here, the Lord Protector would take you hence by force.”

“ I did not expect this,” murmured the duke.

The younger princesses had now come up, and hearing what the queen said, gathered round their brother.

"Since you must go, we will go with you," they said.

"No, no; stay with the queen, our mother, and comfort her," rejoined the duke. "Distress not yourself on my account, dearest mother," he added, to the queen. "Perhaps no harm may happen to me."

"Thy youth and innocence ought to guard thee, my sweet son," said the queen. "Bid farewell to thy sisters."

The young duke then tenderly embraced them all; and the scene was so touching, that even the cardinal and the lords, though well pleased that their mission was accomplished, were moved by it.

“Something tells me we shall not meet again on earth, sweet brother,” said little Bridget, as she kissed the duke; “but we shall meet in heaven.”

The queen had need of all her fortitude to sustain herself at this trying juncture.

Taking her son by the hand, she led him towards those who were waiting for him.

They bowed as he approached ; and the young prince gracefully returned the salutation, bending with especial reverence to the cardinal.

“My lord cardinal, and you, my lords,” said the queen, “I now deliver my son to your keeping. I am confident of your fidelity to him ; for I know you will not betray the trust reposed in you by the king, his father. Before Heaven and man,

I shall require my son again at your hands."

Howard and the other lords made no reply to this address, but simply bowed. Cardinal Bourchier, however, who was much moved by it, said, "Rest easy, madame. I will answer for your son's safety."

She then turned towards the young duke, and after regarding him for a few moments with inexpressible affection, kissed him, and said :

" Farewell, my beloved son ! All good angels guard thee ! Let me kiss thee again ere we part, for Heaven only knows when we shall meet again !"

Once more she pressed him to her heart —once more she kissed him, and blessed him fervently.

But the young prince clung to her, and besought her not to send him away.

Gently detaching his hold, the agonised mother delivered him to Cardinal Bourchier, who advanced to take him from her.

Unconscious that they were conducting the youthful victim to be sacrificed by his bloodthirsty uncle, who was waiting for him in the Star Chamber, the lords rejoiced at their success, and cared nothing for the unhappy queen's anguish.

Just as he was about to quit the hall, the young Duke of York looked back, and beheld his mother, with her eyes streaming, and hands clasped, and looking the very picture of despair. His sisters were gathered round her.

He bade them farewell in his heart, and it was a last farewell.

V.

HOW THE MARQUIS OF DORSET TOOK REFUGE IN THE
SANCTUARY.

THREE days after the removal of the young Duke of York, another event occurred calculated to heighten the unhappy queen's anxiety.

The Marquis of Dorset, her eldest son by her first husband, who had hitherto filled the high offices of Constable of the Tower and keeper of the royal treasures, sought refuge in the Abbey Sanctuary.

When he presented himself to the queen,

she refused to embrace him, and reproached him bitterly with deserting his post, telling him he ought to have held the Tower to the last.

"So long as that fortress was in our power, there was hope for us," she said. "Now there is none."

"Hear how I have been circumstanced, ere you condemn me, madame!" replied Dorset. "Within the last two days I have lost all control in the Tower. Deprived of my offices by Gloucester, who has seized upon the royal treasures, and appropriated them to his own use, I could not enforce obedience from the men composing the garrison, and had I not been concealed in the Wardrobe Tower, by a servant who continued faithful to me, and who subsequently enabled me to escape, I should have

been lodged in a dungeon, and, ere long, brought to the block. Even when I got out of the Tower I was not safe, for the river swarms with barks filled with armed men, on the look-out to arrest our partisans, and prevent any of them from gaining this Sanctuary."

"Ah! dear son, I no longer blame you," cried the queen. "Heaven be praised, you have escaped! From what you say I conclude Gloucester is now in the Tower?"

"He occupies the palace with his retainers," replied Dorset, "and acts as if he were invested with supreme authority, as you may judge, when he styles himself, 'Brother and Uncle of Kings, Protector and Defender, Great Chamberlain, Constable, and Lord High Admiral of England.' While I was hidden in the Wardrobe Tower, I

learnt that the king, your son, and his brother, the Duke of York, are shut up by the usurper in some private apartments of the palace, where none are allowed to see them."

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed the queen. "I much fear they will never come forth again!"

"I can offer you no comfort, madame," said Dorset, "for I share your worst fears. Both your sons are now completely in Gloucester's power, and it is not likely he will part with his prey."

"Have we no friends left to help us in this dire extremity?" cried the queen. "The king was adored in the City. Will not the citizens rise to defend his sons?"

"Madame, as I understand, the whole City of London has been greatly troubled

by these occurrences, and many loyal citizens took up arms, demanding that the young princes should be shown to them; but they were prevailed upon by Hastings, who has much influence with the Lord Mayor and the aldermen, to retire to their own homes. Thus all hope of assistance from that quarter is at an end."

"Hastings has ever been my enemy!" cried the queen. "Next to Gloucester himself I fear him most."

"And with good reason," said Dorset.

At this juncture, Doctor Lewis entered the hall. He seemed surprised to find the Marquis of Dorset there, and expressed his great satisfaction at his lordship's escape from the Tower.

"I will frankly confess that I never thought to behold you again, my lord!" he

said ; “for I am well aware that Gloucester intended your destruction, and I marvel you have been able to escape from him. You are more fortunate than your brother, Lord Gray, and your uncle, Lord Rivers.”

“What of them?” cried the queen, anxiously. “Nay, do not hesitate, good doctor. I have had so many griefs of late, that I am able to bear more.”

“I thought the sad news must have reached you madame, or I should not have spoken of it,” said the physician. “Thus, then, it is. Sir Richard Radcliffe, whom you know to be a great favourite with Gloucester, and ever ready to execute his master’s behests, has entered Pontefract Castle, at the head of a large party of men, and seized upon Lord Rivers, Lord Gray,

Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Sir Richard Hawse."

"I guess what follows," said the queen.

"Without trial, without sentence," pursued the physician, "they were dragged into the outer court, where their heads were stricken off in the presence of a vast number of spectators, who were told they were traitors, and had conspired with the queen to destroy the Duke of Gloucester and his cousin, the Duke of Buckingham, and the old royal blood of the realm."

"My brother and my uncle slain!" cried Dorset. "Where will this blood-thirsty tyrant stop!"

"Not till he has slain us all!" said the queen. "My turn may come next, or yours, my son! Heaven only knows! I thought I could bear the weight of any

fresh calamity that might fall upon me, but my strength fails me. Support me to my chamber, Dorset, and do you come with me, good Master Physician, for I may need your aid."

She then quitted the hall, leaning upon her son, and attended by Doctor Lewis.

VI.

BY WHOM JANE WAS INDUCED TO QUIT THE SANCTUARY.

ON the same day, but at a later hour, Jane was in the abbey cloisters, and was pacing to and fro, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, when she became aware that some one was approaching, and, looking up, she beheld Lord Hastings.

After respectfully accosting her, he said :
“ Till this morning I was not aware you had taken refuge in the Sanctuary. Had you consulted me I should have advised you to remain in your apartments in the

palace. Here you are shut out from all the enjoyments of life, and from all pleasant intercourse with your friends. In effect, you are a prisoner, since you cannot stray far beyond these cloisters. Let me take you hence. I have interest enough with the Lord Protector to shield you from all harm, and save your property from confiscation."

"I doubt not your offer is made in good faith, my lord," she rejoined, "but the Protector can do me little injury. I care not for the confiscation of my goods. I have more money with me than I need. I shall never again take part in the gaieties and pleasures of the world, so that to be shut up here is no punishment to me. As speedily as may be, it is my intention to retire to a convent."

"I might applaud your resolution," said Hastings, "if I thought you were called upon to sacrifice yourself thus. But I see no reason for it. So far from your charms being on the wane, you have not yet reached the meridian of your beauty. When your grief has abated you will reappear, looking more lovely than ever. No, madame, it must not be. The disappearance of a star so brilliant would leave a blank in the firmament."

"My lord," she replied, coldly, "all you can say will fail to move me."

"Yet listen to me!" he said, assuming a more ardent manner. "Circumstances compel me to avow my feelings sooner than I intended. The charms you would bury in a convent have produced a great impression upon me. I love you passionately;

nay, I have long loved you, though, during the king's lifetime, I controlled my passion. Now I can speak freely. From me you will meet with the same devotion you met with from Edward—more, perhaps, for I will live only for you. Again, I pray you, let me take you back to the palace, which, as I have said, you ought never to have quitted."

"No, my lord," she replied; "I will never leave this place, except, as I have told you, for a convent."

"This is madness!" cried Hastings, unable to control his impatience. "As your friend, I am bound to prevent you from carrying this fatal resolution into effect. You are too young, too fair, too captivating, to retire from the world at present. Come with me."

“Hold, my lord!” said Jane, as if struck by a sudden idea. “Before I consent to return with you to the palace, I must have your promise that you will act as I desire.”

“I will do whatever you enjoin,” he replied.

“You pledge your knightly word to this?” she said.

“I do,” he replied, earnestly. “Are you now content?”

“I am content to trust you,” she rejoined.

“Come, then!” he cried, hurrying her along the cloister.

They had not proceeded far, when the queen, attended by the Marquis of Dorset and Doctor Lewis, issued from the ambulatory on the right.

For a moment, her majesty looked as if she doubted the evidence of her senses; but

as Jane stopped to address her, she said, in a haughty tone, "Pass on."

"Grant me a word, madame, ere I depart," said Jane.

"What?" exclaimed the queen, in increased astonishment. "Are you about to quit the Sanctuary?—and with Lord Hastings?"

"She is, madame," replied Hastings.
"She is already wearied of it."

"Dismiss me not unheard, gracious madame," said Jane. "I shall be able to satisfy you——"

"I am already satisfied you have deceived me," said the queen; "and no explanation you can give will induce me to change my opinion. With the powerful friend you have secured, 'tis needless to remain in this asylum. Lord Hastings will protect you."

"I have already promised to do so, madame," said Hastings.

"A word will convince you of the injustice you do me, madame," said Jane.

"Hear what she has to say, I beseech you, madame!" said Doctor Lewis, struck by Jane's manner.

"Speak, then!" said the queen, haughtily.

On this, the others moved away to a short distance, leaving Jane and the queen together.

"My motive for leaving this asylum is to serve you, madame," said Jane.

"Serve me! How?" cried the queen.

"I know not in what way, madame, for I am acting on a sudden impulse; but I am persuaded I can be more useful to you if I am at liberty than here. Should I fail in my endeavours, hold me excused; for you may be sure my heart is with you."

“Enough!” said the queen. Then, lowering her voice, she added, “If you can win over the Lord Hastings, you will do me infinite service.”

“It is in that hope that I leave you, madame,” replied Jane. “I have his promise. And now, farewell, madame. You shall soon hear from me, and by some faithful messenger.”

With a low reverence to the queen, she then joined Lord Hastings, who had watched her narrowly during the interview.

From the cloisters they proceeded to the great hall, where Jane found one of her servants, and gave directions that the household goods she had brought with her should be taken back to the palace.

The outer gate of the Sanctuary was kept constantly closed, and a strong guard placed at it to prevent any attempt to violate the

asylum. Lord Hastings had been allowed admittance, but his attendants were compelled to remain outside.

Jane's heart smote her as she passed through the gate, but she felt she must now go on. Fate forced her to quit the Sanctuary, and rush upon her doom.

Followed by his attendants, Lord Hastings conducted her to the palace.

All had been thrown into confusion by the queen's sudden flight, but Jane's apartments were undisturbed.

Having put her in possession of them, and given orders that the same attention should be paid to her as heretofore, Lord Hastings retired.

End of Book the Fifth.



Book the Sixth.

L O R D H A S T I N G S .



I.

SHOWING THE PERFIDY OF ALICE FORDHAM.

A FEW days after her return to the palace, Jane, to her great surprise, received a visit from her former confidante and companion, Alice Fordham.

Highly indignant, she was about to order the intruder's instant departure; but Alice threw herself on her knees, and made so many protestations of regret for her conduct, that at length Jane forgave her, and allowed her to remain.

"I have behaved infamously to you,

Jane," said the treacherous friend; "but I know the goodness of your heart, and therefore ventured to present myself to you. I still hope I may be able to serve you."

"I never wanted a friend more than now, Alice," said Jane; "and if you are sincere in your professions of regard, you can materially assist me."

"I have come with that intent," said Alice. "I hope I shall be able to free you from your worst enemy, the Lord Protector."

"You promise too much, Alice," remarked Jane. "He is beyond your reach."

"'Tis possible that a mortal blow can be dealt by an unseen hand," said Alice.

"What mean you?" cried Jane, looking at her inquiringly.

" You have heard that a waxen figure can be prepared by certain strong enchantments, in the likeness of an enemy whom we would destroy—so that, as the image melts, our enemy will perish."

" I have heard of such a thing," replied Jane; " but I have no faith in it. Nor, if I believed in the sorcery, would I employ it."

" Here is an image of the Lord Protector," said Alice, producing a small waxen figure. " You may know whom it represents by the high shoulders, and even by the features. I bought it from a witch, by whom it was made, and who assures me it will prove effectual. Pins are struck to the heart, as you see. Try it."

" No," replied Jane; " I will not resort to witchcraft to rid myself of an enemy."

“ You are more scrupulous than the queen,” said Alice. “ She and her mother, the Duchess of Bedford, notoriously practised enchantments, and it has even been said that you yourself brewed philters to enthrall the king.”

“ You could contradict that idle talk, Alice,” said Jane.

“ Yes ; I know the sole magic you practised proceeded from your own fascinations ; but I have heard some credulous people affirm that you retained your power over the king by spells. These persons declare you are now employing the same arts upon Lord Hastings. 'Tis needless to defend yourself to me. I am well aware that Lord Hastings has been long enamoured of you.”

“ Lord Hastings never dared to breathe

a word of love to me till after the king's death," said Jane; "and he is quite aware that his suit is hopeless."

"Is that so?" remarked Alice, sceptically. "Report affirms the contrary. 'Tis said that Lord Hastings has induced you to quit the Sanctuary, and has promised to defend you against all your enemies, even against the Lord Protector."

"That is true," replied Jane. "Lord Hastings has shown himself a devoted friend, but nothing more. I did not encourage his suit, and he desisted. Since I returned to the palace, I have only seen him twice."

"You will see him to-day," said Alice.

"How know you this?" asked Jane.

Alice smiled significantly.

"You will find I am right," she said. "I

perceive you are not inclined to take me into your confidence, and I will not ask it. But I am not to be duped."

"I cannot allow this freedom, Alice," said Jane, coldly. "Our former familiarity must not be renewed. I am not in the mood for idle converse."

"Is that a hint you would have me go?" said the other.

"My spirits are not good. I am best alone," rejoined Jane.

"You expect Lord Hastings, and want to be rid of me," said Alice. "Nay, the remark was made in jest."

"Such jests are not to my taste," said Jane, sharply.

"Certes, you are much changed," rejoined Alice. "But no wonder! The precariousness of your position naturally makes

you feel uneasy. We shall meet again sooner than you expect, and then you may regret that you have not been more gracious to me. Adieu!"

During the foregoing colloquy, Alice had contrived to slip the wax figure into a small coffer that was standing on the table.

The treacherous act was unperceived by Jane.

II.

HOW JANE WAS ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO THE TOWER.

LATER on in the day, Lord Hastings made his appearance.

He looked greatly preoccupied ; and after a greeting had passed between him and Jane, he said to her, “I am sorry I induced you to quit the Sanctuary, and advise you to return thither. I may no longer be able to protect you. If Gloucester persists in his present course, I shall be compelled to declare against him ; and Lord Stanley, the Archbishop of York, and the Bishop of

Ely have come to a like determination. Not only are we denied access to the young king and the Duke of York, but we find they are allowed very few attendants ; while the Lord Protector has an unusual number of retainers, not only at the Tower, but at Crosby House, where he entertains the Lord Mayor and the citizens. The coronation, which ought to take place soon, is again postponed. All this convinces me that the Lord Protector has some ill design."

"Doubt it not, my lord," observed Jane.
"He means to seize his nephew's crown."

"That he shall never do, while I can wield a sword," said Hastings. "I will lay down my life in defence of King Edward's sons. If remonstrances fail, I will resort to sterner means. To-morrow, at the meeting of the Council, I shall demand that the two

princes be brought before us; and if the Protector refuses compliance, I will slay him with my own hand. Buckingham, also, must die. Thus only can the safety of the young princes be secured."

"Have I permission to impart your design to the queen, my lord?" said Jane.

"Breathe it not to any one!" replied Hastings. "Absolute secrecy is required. Gloucester is excessively vigilant, and has a multitude of spies."

Just then he fancied he heard a sound, and, suddenly starting up, he raised a fold of arras.

But, quick as was the action, the listener was gone, if there had been one there.

"'Twas a false alarm," he said, as he returned. "Had I been overheard, my plan would have been ruined, and I should lose

my head. Having explained to you the perilous game I am playing, I will now take my departure. Should success crown my attempt, we shall soon meet again. If not, we part for ever. Meanwhile, follow my advice, and return to the Sanctuary."

For some time after the departure of Lord Hastings, Jane continued occupied in anxious reflection, for she could not disguise from herself the extreme hazard of the attempt.

She then summoned a female attendant, and directed her to pack up a few articles of wearing apparel and some other matters that she wished to take with her to the Sanctuary.

These preparations were soon made, and the handmaiden had just brought in a little valise containing the articles in question,

when the door was thrown open, and, to Jane's great alarm, Sir William Catesby entered with an officer.

Half a dozen halberdiers could be seen standing in the gallery outside.

“Madame,” said Catesby, “I have a disagreeable duty to perform. I am sent by the Lords of the Council to arrest you, and convey you to the Tower.”

“With what offence am I charged, sir?” she demanded.

With conspiring, by certain magical practices, to injure and destroy the Lord Protector,” replied Catesby.

Jane then saw the imprudence she had committed in holding any converse with Alice Fordham, but she unhesitatingly replied, “The charge is false.”

“I hope it may turn out so, madame,”

said Catesby. "My injunctions are to make search for anything tending to prove your criminality."

He then signed to the officer, who proceeded at once to the table, and, after a moment's pretended search, opened the coffer and discovered the wax figure.

Taking it forth, he brought it to his leader.

"Here is proof against you, madame," said Catesby. "There can be no doubt that this is an image of the Lord Protector."

"And equally certain that its object is maleficent," said the officer.

"'Tis a plot against my life, contrived by Alice Fordham," cried Jane.

"You must convince the Council of that," said Catesby.

"I do not expect to convince them," re-

turned Jane, “because they are prejudiced against me, and ready to decide as the Lord Protector may enjoin.”

“Such language will not serve you, madame,” said Catesby. “You must now go to the Tower with me. You are at liberty to take a female attendant with you, and any apparel you may require.”

“I am ready to attend you, sir,” said Jane. “That trunk contains all I need. You will go with me, Miriam,” she added, to her handmaiden, who was weeping bitterly.

“I will go with you to death, madame,” replied Miriam.

“Nay, I trust all will go well,” said Jane. “Thou canst prove that I practise no magic arts.”

“I can, madame,” said the handmaiden, earnestly.

Jane and her attendant were then conducted by a private way to the palace stairs, where a covered boat was waiting, in which they were conveyed to the Tower.

Arrived there, Jane was at once taken to the large chamber in the White Tower, where the Council was sitting at the time.

III.

HOW JANE WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE LORD PROTECTOR
AND THE COUNCIL.

IN that unrivalled hall, in the uppermost story of the White Tower, where consultations on matters of import to the State were then held, the chief members of the Council were assembled.

From the massive wooden pillars supporting the roof of this vast and lofty apartment, heavy tapestry of a sombre hue was hung, so as completely to surround the Council table, and prevent the discussions

there carried on from being overheard by any but privileged officers.

At the head of the Council board sat the Lord Protector, magnificently robed.

On his right was the Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury ; on the left the Archbishop of York. The Duke of Buckingham, the Bishop of Ely, Lord Stanley, and several other nobles, were present, but Lord Hastings did not occupy his customary seat at the table.

Before these personages Jane was brought by Catesby and the officer, after being led through a long gallery filled with armed men ; and when she looked around, and saw the stern countenances fixed upon her, her heart sank, and she felt ready to faint.

By a great effort, however, she recovered her composure, and after making a pro-

found reverence to the Council, waited to be interrogated.

“Bring the woman somewhat nearer to me!” cried the Lord Protector, in a stern voice.

And as the order was obeyed, and Jane came forward, he said :

“Art thou not afraid to look me in the face, after the grievous bodily harm thou hast done me?”

Nothing daunted by his fierce glances, Jane replied :

“I can regard you steadfastly, my lord, and declare before Heaven that I have never injured you.”

“Let this sight confound thee, then!” he cried, drawing up the sleeve of his doublet, and displaying his left arm, the skin of which was shrivelled, and yellow as parch-

ment. “This mischief has been done me by thy enchantments, and had I not discovered the cause, my whole body would have been wasted and dried up.”

A slight murmur pervaded the assemblage.

“My lord,” said Jane, firmly, “the king, your brother, told me that your left arm was thus blighted from your birth, and several here present must be aware of the circumstance. His Grace of Buckingham can testify to it, if he will.”

“I have heard the Lord Protector say that his arm had become strangely shrunken of late,” observed Buckingham; “and I told his highness that the injury must be caused by witchcraft.”

“Ay, and thou art the witch who hast wrought the mischief!” cried Gloucester,

casting a severe look at Jane. “I suspected thee, because I know that by philters and love-potions the king, my brother, was held in thy power.”

“Were King Edward living, you had not dared to accuse me thus, my lord,” replied Jane, courageously. “He would have defended me from the false charge!”

“Thy effrontery is matchless, but it will not avail thee,” said Gloucester. “Proof can be given of thy magic practices.”

“It can, my lord,” observed Catesby, pressing forward. “This figure of your highness, evidently prepared by sorcery, and pierced to the heart by pins, as you see, has just been found in a coffer in Mistress Shore’s room.”

All glances were directed towards the figure, which was laid on the Council table by Catesby.

“This figure, you say, was found in Mistress Shore’s room, Sir William?” demanded Gloucester.

“Scarce two hours ago, my lord,” replied Catesby.

“They who hide can find,” said Jane. “She by whom the figure was fabricated placed it where it could not fail to be discovered. ‘Tis a device to destroy me.”

“Contrived by whom?” said Buckingham.

“By Alice Fordham,” replied Jane.

“Alice Fordham is here,” observed the duke. “Let her be brought before us.”

Alice was introduced; but though she maintained a bold deportment, she did not look towards Jane.

Questioned by the Duke of Buckingham, she denied that she had hidden the magic figure, but asserted that Jane had shown it

to her, and declared that by means of it she could destroy the Lord Protector.

By this statement, which was very confidently made, a certain impression was made on the Council.

It must be remembered that at this time a belief in witchcraft was universally entertained, and few were free from superstition.

“ You swear to the truth of what you have stated ? ” said Buckingham.

“ Solemnly,” replied Alice. “ I have long known that Mistress Shore is a sorceress. Moreover, a far greater lady has been her associate in these dark practices.”

“ Dost hint at the queen, mistress ? ” demanded Gloucester. “ Speak plainly.”

“ Your highness has said it,” replied Alice.

" 'Tis utterly false," cried Jane. " This monstrous accusation will obtain credit from no one."

" I credit it !" thundered Gloucester. " I believe that thou hast conspired with my brother's wife to destroy me by witchcraft, since she can reach me in no other way. With this wicked intent didst thou join her in the Abbey Sanctuary, and there thy malignant spells were wrought."

" I care not to defend myself, my lord !" said Jane. " Believe me guilty if you will, but I will lift up my voice for the queen, since none other in this assemblage will speak for her. If she could subtly and certainly have destroyed your highness, as you assert, would she have delivered up her youngest son to you ? Would she not rather have waited the result of the secret

blow? The Lord Cardinal, and other lords here present, witnessed her anguish, and know that she never expected to behold her son again. Would she have had this fear if she had felt certain of your destruction? I trow not."

"I'll hear no more!" cried Gloucester, impatiently. "I cannot reach your partner in crime, but I will have you burned as a witch."

"I pray your highness to suspend your judgment," interposed Lord Stanley. "The witness against this unhappy lady is utterly unworthy of credit. She is actuated by vindictive feelings, and has herself been guilty of criminal practices, as I will show. Bring in that monk who waits without," he added, to the officer.

Immediately afterwards, a Franciscan

friar was introduced. His cowl was thrown back, so that his pallid features could be seen.

On his appearance a manifest change was produced in Alice's demeanour, but Jane looked wistfully at him.

"What hast thou to state respecting Alice Fordham, father?" demanded Lord Stanley.

"I could state much as to her falsehood and treachery towards her generous friend," replied the friar. "But it may suffice to say that she stole from Mistress Shore a warrant for ten thousand marks, and intended to appropriate the amount to herself, but I forced her to give up the money, and took it back to its rightful owner."

"'Tis a large sum!" exclaimed Gloucester.
"It cannot all have been spent?"

“None of it has been spent by me, my lord,” replied Jane, to whom the question was addressed. “The whole sum has been handed over to the queen.”

“My lord,” said Lord Stanley, “we are all agreed that no credit can be attached to the evidence of Alice Fordham, and our sentence upon her is imprisonment for the offence she has committed.”

“As yet we know not the name of her accuser,” said Gloucester. “How art thou called?” he added, to the friar.

“In bygone days I was known as Alban Shore,” replied the monk.

The answer caused general astonishment.

“Then thou art this woman’s husband!” said Gloucester. “Dost thou not ask for her punishment?”

“No, my lord,” replied Shore.

“But she *shall* be punished cried Gloucester; “if not for sorcery, for incontinency! Take her hence,” he added to the officers. “Lodge her in some prison within the Tower, till I see fit to deliver her to the Bishop of London for punishment.”

“What is to be done with Alice Fordham, my lord?” inquired Catesby.

“Let her likewise be imprisoned,” replied the Lord Protector.

Ere she was removed, Jane looked towards Shore, and found his gaze fixed compassionately upon her.

IV.

PRESAGES OF ILL.

ON that day Lord Hastings did not attend the Council at the Tower, but remained in his magnificent mansion on the banks of the Thames, and occupied himself in preparations for the morrow.

He did not retire to rest till late, but about an hour after midnight he was roused from his slumbers by an attendant, who told him Lord Stanley was without, and desired immediate speech with him.

Surprised and alarmed, Hastings sprang

from his couch, and, putting on a loose gown, caused his untimely visitor to be introduced.

The expression of Lord Stanley's countenance prepared him for some direful communication.

"I have had a remarkable dream to-night," said Stanley, "and it has produced so strong an effect upon me that I have come to relate it to your lordship. It concerns you as well as myself.

"Methought we were hunting the wild boar in a forest that was entirely strange to me. The huntsmen were gone, and the hounds had fled. Both our horses were killed, but we continued the chase on foot. Suddenly the boar turned upon us. We struck him repeatedly with our spears, but he appeared invulnerable. After a short

conflict you were trampled beneath the infuriated animal's feet, and I saw his tusks pierce your side. You were bathed in blood. In vain I strove to assist you. I was thrown down likewise, and gored, and, with a sharp pang, I awoke."

"How do you interpret this dream?" remarked Hastings, after a brief pause.

"Thus, my lord," replied Stanley. "The wounds and blood signify danger of life to both of us. The boar is Gloucester's cognisance, and plainly denotes from whom the danger is to be apprehended. I shall not remain within his reach. I have ordered my horses, and shall set out forthwith to join my friends in the North, and I counsel your lordship to come with me and place yourself in safety."

"I thank you for the warning," said

Hastings, "and though I own the dream is most surprising, and well calculated to cause alarm, it does not give me much uneasiness, nor will it turn me from my purpose. Instead of goring us, the boar, I hope, may be slain. But if you have any misgiving, I would not have you stay. Take horse as you design, and depart forthwith. You must, however, consider that your sudden flight will rouse suspicion, and unless the boar be struck to the heart he may find means of goring you, even at a distance."

"I cannot shake off my fears," said Stanley. "Nevertheless, I agree with you that flight may not insure safety, but perhaps endanger it, and I will, therefore, tarry for the Council to-morrow."

"'Tis the best and boldest course," said Hastings. "You may be of infinite service

to the young king. Let all your retainers wait for you on Tower Hill ; they may be needed."

Stanley then departed, and Hastings returned to his couch ; but not to sleep, for he had been made restless by this nocturnal visit.

Next morning, after he had breakfasted, he was preparing to set out for the Tower, and intended to take with him a large party of armed men, and leave them outside the fortress, when Sir Thomas Howard, son of Lord Howard, and a member of Gloucester's cabinet, made his appearance, and interfered with the plan.

On inquiring why Sir Thomas had come at such an early hour, Hastings was told that he had been sent by the Lord Protector.

“His highness feared that your lordship might not attend the Council to-day, and having important business to despatch, he ordered me to fetch you.”

“I will follow shortly,” said Hastings.

“Nay, my lord; I will wait,” rejoined Sir Thomas. “His highness bade me bring you.”

Finding he could not get rid of his troublesome visitor without causing mistrust, Hastings gave some private orders to his men, and set out on horseback with his enforced companion.

Sir Thomas had two grooms with him, and they appeared extremely watchful. As Lord Hastings rode past Blackfriars, his horse stumbled, and again in Eastcheap, and on the second occasion the rider was nearly thrown.

“Were not your lordship the most fortunate of men, I should say these mischances are unlucky,” observed Sir Thomas.

Hastings made no reply; but continued thoughtful till they approached the Tower.

On looking towards the spot where he had enjoined Stanley to station his men, he could not perceive them, nor did he see any concourse of citizens as he had expected. If a crowd had been collected on Tower Hill, it must have been dispersed.

But he was still further discouraged when, on reaching the barbican, he found the guard doubled, while the outer walls were thronged with armed men.

Not without misgiving did he cross the drawbridge, and pass through the gate.

On inquiry, he learned that Lord Stanley had already arrived, and that the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Ely had

just landed at Tower Stairs, and proceeded to the Council chamber.

Every precaution to repress a tumult seemed to have been taken. A company of archers was drawn up in the lower ward, and a large party of arquebusiers was collected in the inner court.

Had any discovery been made? This Hastings wished to know, yet feared to ask. The preparations he beheld convinced him that his project must be abandoned.

Having dismounted near the Garden Tower, Hastings was marching with his companions towards the palace gate, when he was stopped by a Franciscan friar, who besought a word with him in private.

“What would you, holy father?” inquired Hastings.

“Turn back, if it be possible, my son.”

replied the monk, in a low voice, calculated not to reach the ear of Sir Thomas Howard, who was standing at a little distance. “I would have warned you, but I have not been able to quit the Tower.”

“ ‘Tis too late to turn back now, good father, even if there be danger,” rejoined Hastings. “But why are these preparations made?”

“The Lord Protector suspects some plot against himself, my lord,” replied the monk.

“Ha! Is it so?” cried Hastings.

“Know you what happened yesterday?” inquired the monk.

“Speak! Keep me not in suspense!” said Hastings.

“Mistress Shore was arrested and imprisoned in the Beauchamp Tower,” replied the friar.

“Mistress Shore imprisoned!” exclaimed Hastings. “I thought she had returned to the Sanctuary. With what crime is she charged?”

Before the monk could make any reply, Sir Thomas Howard interposed and said :

“My lord I doubt not the Lord Protector is impatiently expecting you. You cannot have much to say to this holy man. You have no occasion for a priest *as yet!*” he added, significantly.”

“Then you think I may need one presently?” observed Hastings.

“Nay, my lord; I said not so,” rejoined Sir Thomas.

“Act on the hint, good father, and wait,” said Hastings.

V.

NOW LORD HASTINGS WAS BEHEADED ON TOWER GREEN.

ON entering the Council chamber, Hastings found all the members assembled—the only seat vacant being his own, which was situated at the upper end of the table, on the left of the Lord Protector.

“Soh! you are come at length, my lord?” cried Gloucester, in a fierce tone. “You have kept us waiting!”

“I trust I have caused no needless delay, my lord,” replied Hastings. “I learn that the Council has not yet been called upon to deliberate on any matter of import. Before

we proceed further, I have a proposition to make, to which, I persuade myself, your highness will incline a favourable ear. Of late, there have been many disquieting rumours within the City of London, which have produced great agitation among the populace, as your highness must be aware; but these murmurs can be speedily quelled, if the young king be taken from the Tower, where, methinks, he has been too long shut up, and shown to his loving subjects. I, therefore, propose that such a course, which, for the reasons I have given, I deem highly judicious, be adopted, and that the young king and his brother, the Duke of York, be forthwith exhibited to the citizens."

"We do not deem it expedient to carry out your suggestion, my lord," said Glou-

cester. “Our royal nephews are safest within the Tower, and we shall not suffer them to go forth, even at your earnest solicitation.”

“But will not your highness listen to the recommendation of the Council?” said Hastings.

“The vote of the Council has not yet been taken, my lord, and would be against you, I am persuaded,” rejoined Gloucester. “But why this sudden change of opinion? Till now you have judged it best that the young king should remain secluded, with his brother, till the coronation. Have you been instigated to make this request by the queen? If so, I can understand the motive.”

“I have held no communication with the queen, my lord,” replied Hastings. “Her

majesty has no liking for me, neither have I any affection for her."

"But you have conspired with Mistress Shore, who is in the queen's confidence."

"Your highness wrongs me!" cried Hastings."

"You have conspired, I say, with that sorceress against my life!" roared Gloucester. "Had not your treasonable design been revealed to me, I should infallibly have been your victim. Your purpose was to stab me where I sit, and next bathing your steel in Buckingham's life-blood, to seize upon the two young princes. 'Tis useless to deny it, for there is one here who overheard you."

"Who is my accuser?" demanded Hastings.

"I am, my lord," replied Catesby, step-

ping forward. “Learn, to your confusion, that I was behind the arras when you disclosed your design to Mistress Shore!”

“Now thou seest how I became acquainted with thy villainy!” cried Gloucester.

“Your purpose was to slay the Lord Protector and the Duke of Buckingham at the Council table, and then take upon you the government of the young king and the kingdom,” pursued Catesby. “But Heaven would not suffer such an evil scheme to prosper.”

“Dost thou hear, traitor?—dost thou hear?” cried Gloucester.

At this juncture, several members of the Council, who had hitherto been kept silent by astonishment and alarm, rose to their feet.

Gloucester, however, would allow no interference, but struck his hand violently twice or thrice upon the table.

At this signal, several halberdiers rushed in, and, by the Lord Protector's orders, seized Hastings, who offered no resistance.

Lord Stanley, however, came to the assistance of his friend, but received a severe wound in the head, and fell beneath the table. By the direction of Catesby, who conducted these proceedings, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Ely were next arrested, and these measures caused the greatest consternation among the Council.

“What shall be done with this heinous offender, my lord?” said Catesby, pointing to Hastings, who remained in custody of the guard.

“I will not ask my life,” said the ill-fated noble, with dignity. “I am well convinced your highness will not spare me, either for old friendship or for service rendered you.”

“Thou hast forfeited all claim upon me,” rejoined Gloucester, in an inexorable tone. “Take him forth,” he added. “Let him make a short shrift, if he will. By Saint Paul ! I will not dine till I have had his head !”

The unfortunate Hastings was then hurried away, lest his looks should excite compassion among the members of the Council.

Dragged by his guards along the gallery at the side of the Council chamber, he was forced down a spiral stone staircase to the guard chamber, whence, without even allow-

ing a momentary halt, he was taken forth upon the green, and led towards Saint Peter's Chapel.

Catesby, with his sword drawn, marched at a little distance behind the doomed man, but not a word passed between them.

Close to the sacred edifice lay a log of wood, intended for repairs. Beside this piece of timber, and showing that some preparations had been made for the execution, stood two figures. These were the Franciscan friar with whom Hastings had recently spoken, and the headsman.

The latter, who was leaning upon his axe, was a strongly-built, savage-looking personage, with brawny arms bared to the shoulder. He wore a buff jerkin and a leather apron, and had a leather cap on his head.

“Make the most of your time, my lord,” said Catesby, advancing. “Many minutes cannot be allowed you.”

He then retired; and Hastings threw himself at the feet of the monk, who held the crucifix towards him.

“Have you aught to confess to me, my son?” inquired the monk.

“Alas! good father,” cried Hastings, “had I as many hours left as I have minutes, I could not enumerate half my sins!”

“Do not despair, my son,” replied the monk. “Do you forgive all your enemies, even him who has brought you to this terrible strait?”

“Even him,” replied Hastings; “and I pray earnestly that all those I have injured may forgive me.”

“Since your repentance, though late, is deep and sincere, I grant you absolution,” replied the monk. “By the power derived from holy Peter, I will loose and deliver you from all your sins, known and unknown, mortal and venial. Wherefore, raise up your heart to Heaven! Accept of the penance of death as due to your sins, and trust in Divine mercy.”

“I do so implicitly, father,” replied Hastings, fervently. “May Heaven be merciful to me, a sinner!”

“Amen!” exclaimed the monk.

“Are you ready, my lord?” observed the headsman, receiving an impatient sign from Catesby. “Time grows short.”

Divesting himself of his richly-embroidered mantle, Hastings threw it on the ground.

“Take that as thy fee, fellow!” he said.

“Kneel down, my lord!” said the grim headsman, pointing to the rude block.

Hastings obeyed, and his head was stricken off by a single blow.

A cry from a window in the Beauchamp Tower showed that Jane had witnessed the terrible incident.

“Wrap this ghastly relic in a napkin,” said Catesby to the headsman, “and take it to the Lord Protector. He has sworn not to dine till it be brought him!”

End of Book the Sixth.

Book the Seventh.

T H E P E N A N C E.

I.

OF THE ATTEMPT MADE BY DORSET TO DELIVER THE
YOUNG PRINCES FROM THE TOWER.

THE death of Hastings, and the imprisonment of Lord Stanley, the Archbishop of York, and the Bishop of Ely, struck such terror into the few remaining adherents of the young princes, that no further attempt was made to oppose Gloucester's daring design.

The crown was shortly afterwards publicly offered him by Buckingham, before a large assemblage, at Baynard's Castle, and

accepted with feigned reluctance, amid shouts of “Long live Richard the Third !”

The treasures amassed by his royal brother were next seized upon, and appropriated to his own use, or bestowed on his favourites.

The ceremonies prepared for his nephew were destined to serve his own turn, and the usurper’s coronation took place, with great splendour, in Westminster Abbey.

But though he had attained the summit of his ambition, he could not feel secure while his nephews lived. Some rising would infallibly be made in their favour that might hurl him from the throne, and set up Edward the Fifth in his stead. Already, Buckingham, who had helped to raise him, was discontented, and no more formidable leader of a rebellion could be found.

The pretext would infallibly be, “King Edward’s children.” That cry must never be heard. It was useless to shut up his nephews in the Tower. They would escape, or be set free. No : they must be removed by death, as all others who stood in his way had been removed. But the manner of their death must be mysterious and inexplicable. None, save the perpetrators of the deed, must know how they perished.

Having formed his fatal determination, the usurper resolved to carry it out. To this end he deemed it best to absent himself for a while from London, hoping by such means to avoid suspicion ; and he therefore set out on a progress to York, and journeyed as far as Gloucester, where he halted, the distance from London being suitable to his wicked design.

Meanwhile, his intended victims continued prisoners in the Tower, and occupied two or three rooms situated at the rear of the palace, and looking upon the Privy Garden.

All their pages and attendants had been dismissed, and only one person, Dighton, the warden, was allowed to wait upon them.

Subdued by this harsh treatment, the young King Edward the Fifth, as he had once been styled, almost, it now seemed, in mockery, became very melancholy, and neglected his attire, and, though he uttered few complaints, it was evident he was pinning away.

The little Duke of York, however, managed to keep up his spirits, and endeavoured to cheer his brother ; but not even

his lively sallies could bring a smile to Edward's pale face.

One day, when the unfortunate young prince was seated in a large arm-chair, in a listless posture, and looking very pensive and very sad, the Duke of York came behind him, and, putting his arms round his neck, said :

“Prithee, tell me your thoughts, sweet brother.”

“I was thinking how much happier I should be if I had not been born a prince, Richard. Had I not the misfortune to be a king's son, I should be at liberty—able to do as I please, and go where I list. I should provoke no man's jealousy. And thou, sweet brother, art equally unfortunate.”

“I would not renounce my birthright if Gloucester would set me free on that con-

dition," rejoined the Duke of York. "Do not despair, brother ; you may yet sit upon the throne."

"Never!" replied Edward. "I shall never reign, nor wilt thou ! We are doomed. The sins of our fathers will be visited upon us. Listen to me, brother," he continued solemnly. "All the descendants of Edmond Langley, chief of the House of York, have died a violent or premature death. Our great-grandsire, Edward, Duke of York, was slain at the battle of Azincour. Richard, Earl of Cambridge, his brother, lost his head upon the scaffold. Our grandsire, Richard, Duke of York, and his son, Edmond, Duke of Rutland, perished at Wakefield. Our uncle, the Duke of Clarence, was murdered here, in the Tower. The king, our father, died before his time ; and

'tis said," he added, lowering his voice, "that he died by poison. Shall we escape Divine vengeance—we, who belong to the fourth generation? I fear not, brother—I fear not!"

"But we have committed no crime!" said Richard.

"Our fathers have sinned, and we must suffer, as I have just pointed out," rejoined Edward. "We ought not to repine."

"Nevertheless, I find the confinement in these rooms very irksome," observed Richard. "I would get out of the Tower if an opportunity offered. But we are too closely watched by Dighton. He will not even let us take exercise in the Privy Garden, or in the court. He says it is against the king's order. Why, you are the king, brother!"

"Alas! no; I am deposed," said Edward.

"If Gloucester is an instrument of Heaven, he must be a scourge," observed Richard. "But I think he is an agent of the Prince of Darkness. When the king our father lived, Gloucester did not dare raise his hand against us, and now he treats us thus infamously. But we will repay him."

"Peace, brother!" cried Edward.

"I cannot hold my peace. I am too greatly incensed," rejoined Richard. "I would tax Gloucester with cruelty and treachery to his face, if he came near us."

"Have a care, brother!" said Edward, as a noise was heard at the door. "Here comes Dighton with our repast."

"Dighton is the tool of a tyrant!" cried Richard, determined that the warder should hear him.

But it was not Dighton who entered.

It was a tall young man, habited precisely like the warder, but much taller, and differing in feature and manner. He brought with him a basket containing a few eatables and bread, which he placed on the table.

While he was thus occupied, the two young princes stared at him, as if doubting the evidence of their senses.

At length they both sprang towards him, calling out, “ ‘Tis Dorset — our brother Dorset!” and flung themselves into his welcoming arms.

Yes; it was the Marquis of Dorset in that strange disguise.

“ You need not be told that I have ventured here in the hope of liberating you,” said Dorset, as soon as he had extricated himself from their embrace. “ If Heaven

prospers my undertaking, you shall both be out of Gloucester's power to-night."

"So soon!" exclaimed Richard, clapping his hands joyfully.

"Calm yourself, brother!" said Edward.
"Let us hear Dorset's plan."

"The attempt would never have been made but for the queen's entreaties," said the marquis. "But I could not resist her prayers, and yesterday ventured forth from the Sanctuary on this perilous errand. At the very onset there was danger, for the Sanctuary is now surrounded by armed men, to prevent all egress and ingress; but I escaped. After making all needful arrangements for your flight, I contrived to gain admittance to the Tower, and, by promise of a large reward, purchased the assistance of your attendant, Dighton. I have thus gained access to you. To-night

a boat will be outside the Tower wharf, waiting to carry off two fugitives. You will both, I trust, be on the wharf at midnight—will both be placed on board the boat and conveyed in safety to Westminster—and thence, despite all difficulties, to the Sanctuary, where you will be clasped to the queen's anxious breast."

"That thought gives me fresh energy," said Edward. "I never hoped to behold the queen and my sisters again. But how are we to reach the wharf, my lord?"

"I will conduct you thither," replied Dorset. "Hold yourselves in readiness for my appearance. At the appointed hour I will come to you; and then, if all goes well, you shall be quickly free from constraint, and as quickly restored to the queen."

"Heaven deliver us from our uncle Glou-

cester! That shall be my fervent prayer to-night!" said Richard.

Bidding them be careful what they said to Dighton, should the warder visit them, Dorset then took his departure.

II.

HOW THE ATTEMPT FAILED.

As may well be supposed, the intervening hours seemed to pass very slowly with the youthful prisoners—especially with the Duke of York, whose disposition was exceedingly impatient. They did nothing but talk of the queen and the princesses, their sisters, and of the expected joyful meeting with them, Alas! it was destined never to take place.

In the evening, Dighton brought them supper, and lighted their lamp, and they

thought he regarded them wistfully, but in compliance with Dorset's injunctions, they did not address him, and he soon went away.

Nothing further occurred. After awhile, they grew tired of talking, and Richard fell asleep on his brother's shoulder, and slumbered on thus till near midnight, when Edward, who had counted the hours by the bell, thought it best to wake him.

Scarcely had he done so, when the door opened, and Dorset came in.

“Are you ready?” he asked.

“Quite ready!” they both replied.

After extinguishing the lamp—for Dorset being well acquainted with the place, did not require a light—they went forth, and tracked a long, dark corridor.

No guard appeared to be stationed there,

nor could any light be seen, or sound heard. But Dorset easily discovered a short spiral staircase communicating with the Privy Garden.

Taking a hand of each, Dorset then led them noiselessly across the garden. Fortunately, the night was profoundly dark, so there was small chance of discovery.

Presently they came to a postern constructed in the high stone wall surrounding the garden, and Dorset having cautiously unlocked this door, they issued forth into the outer ward, almost opposite the Cradle Tower.

Again the darkness screened them from the observation of the sentinels, if there were any on the walls.

At that time a vaulted gateway connected with the tower just mentioned, led to a

narrow drawbridge, which was defended by a strong iron gate.

Through the instrumentality, doubtless, of Dighton, the little drawbridge was now lowered, and the gate open, and in another minute the youthful princes and their conductor had crossed the moat, and were standing safely upon the wharf, with the darkling river flowing past them.

At last they were out of the Tower, and escape seemed now certain.

Richard could hardly repress his transports of delight, and even Edward felt elated.

They all flew to the edge of the wharf, resolved not to lose an instant in springing on board; but how dreadfully were their expectations crushed, when no boat could be descried!

Dorset still hoped the boat would come. But the risk of discovery would be infinitely increased by delay, and he looked back in terror, and listened anxiously for any alarming sound from the walls.

Again he plunged his gaze into the darkness—hoping, praying, that the boat might appear. But it came not.

A slight fog hung upon the river, and this added to the obscurity. Sounds were heard in the distance, but nothing could be distinguished.

During this severe trial, the sensations of the unfortunate young princes almost amounted to agony, but they uttered no reproaches.

Edward stood quite still, though trembling in spite of himself; but Richard seized Dorset's hand, and said :

"Brother, do not let them take us back to the Tower."

"What can I do?" rejoined Dorset, distractedly. "What can I do?"

Just then a sound was heard that annihilated all hope, if any had remained.

The alarm bell was rung in the palace, and shouts resounded along the walls.

Almost instantaneously, as it seemed, torches were brought to the summit of the Traitor's Tower, and these cast a lurid light upon the river, and disclosed the youthful fugitives standing upon the wharf, while loud shouts arose from the guard, who were armed with arquebuses. They did not fire, for they had recognised the young princes; but they ordered them not to stir.

At the same time, armed men, provided with torches, could be seen hurrying

through the archway of the Portcullis Tower into the outer ward, and shouts were exchanged between this party and the arquebusiers on Traitor's Tower, from which the former learnt that the fugitives were on the wharf, whereupon Sir Robert Brakenbury, who was with the party, hastened in that direction.

Seeing that capture was inevitable, Dorset consulted for a moment with the young princes, who approved his design, and bidding them, as it proved, an eternal adieu, he ran to the edge of the wharf, and plunged into the river.

Surprised by this desperate step, the arquebusiers, who took him from his garb to be a warder, instantly fired, but none of the shots took effect, and he swam rapidly down the current.

Next moment, Sir Robert Brakenbury, followed by a dozen halberdiers, appeared on the wharf.

It was a very affecting sight as the young princes surrendered themselves to the lieutenant. Brakenbury made few observations at the time, putting no questions to them as to their escape, and forbore even to ask the name of the individual who had plunged into the river.

Very respectfully, and with a sad expression of countenance, he conducted the princes back to their apartments in the palace, deferring all investigation until the morrow, and only giving orders that the guard should be doubled.

III.

IN WHAT MANNER THE YOUNG PRINCES WERE PUT TO
DEATH IN THE GARDEN TOWER.

KING RICHARD THE THIRD was at Warwick Castle when he received intelligence of the attempt to liberate the young princes, and he resolved no longer to delay their destruction.

Already he had sent a confidential messenger to Brakenbury with a letter enjoining him to make away secretly with the prisoners, but the lieutenant refused to obey the order.

Richard was therefore obliged to find an-

other agent, and after some consideration, he chose Sir James Tyrrell, one of his retinue, whom he knew to be bold and unscrupulous.

Tempted by the promises of immediate reward and future preferment, Tyrrell accepted the dreadful task without hesitation, and set out at once for the Tower, furnished with an order from the king to the lieutenant.

On his arrival, he had a private conference with Brakenbury.

The lieutenant again refused to be accessory to any secret murder, and said :

“ My soul revolts against the deed, and if I could prevent it I would ; but I am powerless, as you know. On your head, and not on mine, be the blood of these innocents ! ”

Tyrrell did not seem to heed the abhorrence with which his fell design was regarded by the lieutenant, but prepared to execute the king's mandate.

Dighton, the warden, who still attended on the princes, having contrived to satisfy the lieutenant that he had no hand in the recent attempt to escape, appeared a fitting instrument for the business, and proved to be pliant.

With him was associated Miles Forrest, who had been concerned in the murder of the Duke of Clarence, and these two miscreants undertook a deed from which all others shrank.

Within the last few days, by an order received from the king, the unfortunate princes had been removed—for greater security, it was said, but it may be for other

reasons—from the palace to the Garden Tower, as the structure was then styled—though it subsequently acquired a far more terrible designation, which still continues attached to it.

Beneath this tower yawns a low-browed archway, once protected by a massive gate at either end, and by a strong portcullis.

Immediately above the arch, and reached by a short circular stone staircase, is a room in which the portcullis is worked ; and this gloomy chamber and the ponderous defensive machine—though the latter is no longer used—are still in pretty nearly the same state as heretofore.

It was in the upper part of this structure that the two princes were confined on their removal from the palace.

A small chamber was assigned them, con-

taining a bed and one or two chairs, with another still smaller room adjoining it.

Nothing could be more dismal than the appearance of these cells—for such they were, in effect. The mullioned windows were strongly grated like those of a dungeon. The massive door of the little bed-chamber was constantly locked and bolted at night by Dighton, and there was another strong door below to shut off the portcullis room, which was reached by a separate staircase.

The bed-chamber window looked upon the inner ward, and upon the White Tower; but it was placed too high up to be easily reached, and the youthful captives never gazed out from it.

Since the failure of their attempt at flight, they had become completely dis-

heartened. Even Richard had lost his spirit. But as calamity pressed upon them, their brotherly love strengthened, and served to support them.

Convinced they had not long to live, they strove to prepare for death. No priest visited them—no one whatever was allowed to come near them, except Dighton, and his manner was now exceedingly morose.

But they had a missal, given to Richard by the queen, which proved an inexpressible comfort to them. They read it together continually, and while they were thus employed, their hearts seemed lightened. Often did they wish they could pass away quietly while occupied in prayer.

Ever since they had been immured in this cell, a change had gradually taken place in their looks. Their features had

now a sweet, resigned, almost angelic expression, which they wore to the last.

Their discourse was no longer of earthly matters, but of celestial joys, in which they hoped to participate.

“Heaven, in its mercy, will soon take us hence,” said Edward, “and then we shall be free from all care. Our sufferings, I trust, will serve as an atonement for such sins as we have committed. Do you forgive all our enemies, Richard?”

“All, except our cruel uncle,” replied the little Duke of York. “Him I cannot forgive.”

“But you must forgive even *him!*” said Edward, gravely.

“I will try to do whatever you enjoin me, brother,” said the duke. “But this is beyond my power. I have not told you of the dream I had last night.”

“I had a dream likewise,” said Edward. “Let me relate mine first. Methought this prison-chamber opened, and we were wafted away by angels.”

“My dream was precisely similar,” observed Richard. “What do such visions portend, brother?”

“A speedy death,” replied Edward. “Perchance to-night!”

Richard heard the explanation without a tremor.

“I thought so,” he said; “and, therefore, I did not mention my dream before.”

“I shall lay my head upon the pillow tranquilly,” said Edward, “hoping I may awake in heaven.”

“And so shall I, brother,” said Richard.

That night, at a late hour, the door of the cell was opened, and two dark figures

could be seen standing outside, one of whom held a lamp.

Despite the noise caused by drawing back the bolts, the gentle sleepers did not wake. They were lying close together, and Richard's arm encircled his brother's neck. From their looks they might be dreaming of Paradise.

Touching as the picture was, it moved not the ruffians who contemplated it.

But as they seemed to pause, a stern voice was heard from the stone staircase, commanding them to proceed with their work.

The foremost ruffian then stepped forward, and plucked the pillow from beneath the heads of the sleepers.

Even then the princes did not stir, though Richard sighed. It seemed beneficently

intended that they should pass away in slumber.

Five minutes later, the dreadful deed was done.

Sir James Tyrrell entered the chamber. The murderers, with their ghastly countenances, were standing beside the couch. The light of the lamp fell upon the victims. The pillow had been removed. The attitude of the brothers was unchanged—their expression placid, even in death.

By Sir James Tyrrell's direction, the unfortunate princes were buried deep in the ground at the foot of the stone staircase.

Subsequently, however, the bodies were conveyed, by King Richard's order, to another grave in the White Tower, which remained long undiscovered.

But the remains of the royal youths

being found in 1674, they were finally interred in Henry the Seventh's Chapel in Westminster Abbey.

Having accomplished his work, Sir James Tyrrell set off for Warwick to claim his reward.

His reward, in the end, was the scaffold.

Dorset was not drowned on the night when he attempted to liberate the princes from the Tower. He was picked up by a boat, and after running several other risks, contrived to regain the Abbey Sanctuary.

It was his sad office to inform the queen of the murder of her two sons.

Uttering a piercing shriek, she fell to the ground.

When she recovered her sensibility, she appeared half frenzied, filled the hall with cries, tore her hair, beat her breast, and re-

proached herself bitterly with her madness in delivering her youngest son to destruction.

“My Richard, my darling, would be here now, if I had remained firm!” she cried. “How could I part with him—how could I surrender him to the bloodthirsty Gloucester?”

She then knelt down, and with outstretched hands, invoked Heaven’s vengeance.

“O, Lord!” she exclaimed, “remember, I pray thee, the death of these innocents, and avenge them!”

IV.

HOW JANE WAS DELIVERED TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON
FOR PUNISHMENT.

CONFINED for more than three months in the Beauchamp Tower, Jane had begun to look upon her prison as a haven of rest.

Her captivity had been wholly spent in devotion and acts of penitence, enjoined by her confessor, Father Lambert. Had the good priest been able to obtain a pardon from the vindictive king, he could have procured her admission to the Priory of Saint Helen's, the prioress being willing to

receive her. But Richard's resentment was still strong as ever against her. Alice Fordham was set free, but Jane was reserved for punishment.

At length the officers of the Ecclesiastical Court came to the Tower, demanded the body of Jane Shore, and received her from the lieutenant.

No indignity was spared her. Guarded by half a dozen halberdiers, like a common criminal, she was taken across Tower Hill, and through the public streets to the palace of the Bishop of London, which was situated on the north-west side of Saint Paul's.

She was accompanied by Father Lambert, and she had need of the good priest's support. As she passed along Cornhill and Cheapside, she was beset by crowds of curious spectators, but her looks and de-

meanour were so gentle and resigned, that all who beheld her were filled with compassion.

On arriving at the bishop's palace, she was lodged in a small cell, and here Father Lambert left her, promising to attend at the court on the morrow.

A miserable pallet was provided, and her fare was bread and water, but she slept well on her wretched couch, and having resolved to fast, the food remained untouched.

Next day she was brought before the court, which was assembled in a large hall of the palace, panelled with black oak, and partially hung with tapestry. At the upper end was a large crucifix.

The bishop was in full ecclesiastical attire, as were the dignitaries of the cathedral, by whom he was surrounded.

The prelate had an austere expression of countenance, and eyed Jane sternly as she stood before him.

She cast one timid, half-supplianting look at her judges, and then fixed her eyes on the ground.

She was very pale, and her cheeks bore traces of affliction, but her beauty was unimpaired, as all who beheld her acknowledged in their hearts.

Her dress was plain as that of a nun, and consisted of a gown of grey serge, and a wimple. A string of beads hung from her girdle. When she had been compelled to pass through the streets, she had worn a hood, but this was now laid aside, and her fair tresses were uncovered.

Very few persons were admitted, or the court would have been inconveniently

crowded. Among those present were the Lord Mayor and several important citizens, who had petitioned the king in Jane's favour, but had not yet received an answer, though it was momentarily expected.

This circumstance caused a slight delay in the proceedings, but as no messenger appeared, the bishop clothed his brow with frowns, and addressing Jane in a stern tone, severely censured her for her conduct—lashing her as with a whip of scorpions.

She attempted no reply, for she had nothing to allege in her defence; but Father Lambert earnestly recommended her to mercy on the score of her deep and sincere penitence, to which he could bear witness.

Doctor Lewis, the late king's physician, made a strong appeal to the bishop and the

court in her behalf, enumerating the many kind actions she had performed, and energetically declaring that if all those she had benefited and served were there to speak for her, the court would be filled with them.

But this eloquent address failed to touch the judges, and the bishop was preparing to pass sentence, when an officer entered the court with a missive for the Lord Mayor.

The prelate paused while the letter was opened, and a feeling of intense anxiety pervaded the assemblage for a few moments, but it was then seen from the Lord Mayor's looks that the petition had failed.

At this trying juncture Jane manifested no emotion, and did not even raise her eyes.

Perfect silence being again restored, the bishop sentenced Jane to perform public penance for her sin, the enormity of which he had already characterised, in Saint Paul's Cathedral on the following morning.

But the severe part of the sentence was to come, and for this the majority of the assemblage were wholly unprepared.

“Look at me, wretched woman, while I pronounce thy doom!” said the bishop, yet more sternly than he had hitherto spoken. “When thou hast publicly declared thy repentance in the manner prescribed, it is the king’s command that thou be cast forth into the streets in thy penitent garb, and be thenceforth treated as one excluded from the communion of our holy Church. None shall afford thee shelter, none give thee food or drink, on pain of death, but

thou shalt be left to perish miserably !
Such is thy sentence, and doubt not it will
be rigorously fulfilled. I give thee no hope
of pardon !"

A slight cry escaped Jane, but that was all. A couple of halberdiers advanced, and took her back to the cell.

As she quitted the court, she threw a grateful glance at Father Lambert and Doctor Lewis.

V.

HOW THE PENANCE WAS PERFORMED.

NEXT morning, at an early hour, an immense crowd was collected within the area in front of Saint Paul's, it having been rumoured throughout the City that the beautiful Mistress Shore was about to perform public penance on that day.

The greatest curiosity was exhibited to witness the spectacle, and every available spot likely to command a view of it was occupied.

Every window looking upon the court of the bishop's palace, upon Paul's Cross, and upon the great western porch of the cathedral, was filled with spectators.

Gloomy weather harmonised with the scene about to be enacted. The vast edifice around which the throng was gathered looked unusually sombre, and its lofty spire could scarcely be distinguished amid heavy overhanging clouds.

Jane's career and extraordinary beauty formed the general theme of conversation. Though her conduct was blamed, some excuses were made for her, and it was universally admitted that her sentence was infinitely too severe. Many, indeed, spoke of it with horror and indignation.

To repress any attempt at tumult, a troop of archers was stationed at the rear of Paul's Cross.

Moreover, two lines of halberdiers extended from the gate of the bishop's palace to the cathedral porch.

About nine o'clock, a bell began to toll, and a solemn procession issued from the palace gate, and took its way slowly along the lane formed by the halberdiers.

The procession was headed by a long train of monks, in gowns and scapularies of brown russet. After them followed the chantry priests in their robes, the minor canons, the prebendaries, and the dean, all in full pontificals.

Next came a priest, with a richly decorated crozier, and then the bishop himself, wearing a mitre blazing with jewels, and a splendidly embroidered dalmatic.

Marching on with a proud step, the prelate was followed by a cross-bearer, carrying a large silver cross.

Then came the penitent, carrying in her hand a lighted taper.

Her profuse fair tresses were unbound, and streamed down over her shoulders. Her feet were bare, and her only garment was a white kirtle, that scarcely sufficed to conceal the exquisite proportions of her figure.

Exhibited in this guise to thousands of prying observers, she felt a shame amounting to agony, made manifest by her blushes and shrinking deportment.

Yet she walked on, though expecting each moment to sink to the ground. Had not words of sympathy and commiseration reached her ear, and given her strength, she must have fallen.

Never for a moment did she raise her eyes. Behind her came another train of priests and monks.

Presently, the procession reached the porch ; and the dean and bishop having passed into the fane, she was seen climbing the stone steps with her small white feet.

She was now on the very spot where she beheld the king on her wedding-day ; and the thought crossed her, and gave her an additional pang.

Many of the spectators remembered having seen her there on that day, and were forcibly struck with the contrast of the present with the past. Yet none of them declared they had foreseen what would occur.

In another moment she had entered the sacred edifice, and was pacing the cold pavement of the nave, along which moved the procession.

The whole interior of the vast fabric was crowded, and the ordeal to which the penitent had now to submit was quite as trying as that she had previously experienced.

More so, indeed ; for the spectators, not being kept back by a guard, now pressed closely upon her.

From observations that reached her, she learnt that the Lord Mayor and several important citizens were present ; but she saw them not.

At length she approached the high altar, around which was collected the priestly train. Kneeling down before the altar, she acknowledged her guilt, in accents that scarcely reached the ear of the bishop, and declared her profound repentance.

“ Some atonement has now been made, daughter,” said the prelate ; “ but your sin

is not yet expiated. I have no power to remit the sentence passed upon you by the king. Arise, and depart!"

"Depart! Whither?" she exclaimed, looking as if her senses had left her. "May I not die here?"

The bishop made no reply.

Two priests then came forward, and bade her follow them. She made no more remonstrances, but obeyed.

Pitying exclamations were heard from the assemblage as she was led through their midst, and these expressions of sympathy soon deepened into threats against her conductors.

What might have happened it is difficult to say, had not a party of halberdiers, headed by an officer, met them, and taken charge of the penitent.

Placing her in their midst, the halberdiers conducted her to a side door, where they detained her for a few moments while the party of archers previously referred to was drawn up.

They then led her to Paul's Cross, so that she could be seen by the entire assemblage.

A trumpet was then sounded, and proclamation made by an officer, in the king's name, that Jane Shore, having been excommunicated for her sins, none were to afford her food or shelter, on pain of death.

A like proclamation was afterwards made at the cross at Cheapside, and at other places in the City.

Parties of archers were likewise ordered to patrol the streets during the remainder

of the day, and throughout the night, to see
the injunction strictly obeyed.

Meanwhile, the crowd had been dispersed
by the archers, and Jane was left alone,
seated on the lowest step of Paul's Cross,
with her face covered by her hands.

VI.

EXPIATION.

A HARSH voice at length aroused her from the state of apathy into which she had sunk, and, looking up, she beheld a mounted archer.

The man had a savage aspect, and seemed wholly unmoved.

"You cannot remain here longer, woman!" he said. "You are in the way."

"I know not where to turn my steps," she replied, despairingly. "I have little

strength left. All will soon be over with me. Let me stay here to the last."

"Paul's Cross is not a place of refuge, but a pulpit for preaching," he rejoined, "and good folks will come here anon to listen to a sermon from the dean. The officers will then drive you hence with stripes, if you go not willingly."

"May I not return to the cathedral?" she implored.

"The doors of all churches are closed against you. Bring not further trouble on your head, but begone!"

He then rode back slowly to his comrades, two of whom were stationed at the gates of the bishop's palace.

Three others kept guard on the eastern side of the enclosure, which was now completely deserted, except by a few priests.

Groups of persons, however, were collected at the corners of the streets leading towards the cathedral, watching the penitent from a distance, and many pitying spectators were gazing at her with tearful eyes from the windows of the surrounding habitations.

But none dared help her—none dared come near her. The few who made the attempt were quickly driven back by the guard.

Father Lambert desired to offer her religious consolation, but was not allowed to approach her.

For several hours she wandered through the streets, scarcely knowing whither she went. The guard followed her at a distance, and forced her to go on. Her feet were cut by the sharp stones, and left marks

of blood on the pathways. But the guard allowed her no rest, and suffered no one to assist her.

Completely worn out, at length, she attempted to enter the hospital of Saint Mary of Bethlehem, in Bishopsgate-street, but was rudely repulsed by the porter, and fell senseless to the ground.

When she fully regained her senses, which was not for a long time, since no means were taken for her recovery, she found herself lying beside a cross in a field, outside the City walls.

The spot was solitary, and she had been taken there to die undisturbed.

For this good office, by whomsoever performed, she felt thankful. That her sufferings would soon be over, she doubted not. Never since she quitted the Tower had food

passed her lips. The bread and water in her cell at the bishop's palace were left untouched. The duration of her punishment was thus abridged.

But she felt not the pains of starvation. Her strength was now nearly gone, and her faintness and exhaustion were such that she could not raise herself, though her desire was very great to kneel down at the foot of the cross.

But she could pray, and she prayed constantly and fervently.

Night had come on, but the pale glimmer of a crescent moon showed her the ancient walls of the City, with a fortified gate in the distance, and a monastic structure close at hand.

From the monastery came the sound of a hymn. She listened to the strains, and they greatly soothed her.

At length the solemn chant ceased, and the lights hitherto visible in the windows of the grey old pile disappeared. The brethren had retired to rest.

No ; the gate opened, and a friar came forth, and took his way slowly towards the cross.

A thrill passed through her frame as he stood beside her. His hood was thrown back, and the moonlight revealed the pallid countenance of Alban Shore.

His features wore a pitying expression.

“ Do you receive your sufferings as a penance justly inflicted by Heaven for your sin ? ” he said. “ Do you truly and heartily repent ? ”

“ Truly and heartily ! ” she murmured.

“ Then may Heaven forgive you, even as I forgive you,” he said.

She pressed his hand to her lips.

Ere many minutes her sorrows were over,
and Shore was praying by the lifeless body
of the erring woman he had never ceased
to love.

THE END.



